Hafa Adai!

SUNDAY

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

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INSIDE

Screen Savers

To enjoy great weather without the distraction of bugs indoors, humans created screens.

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Highway Crash

An unlicensed charter bus blew a tire and skidded off a highway, killing at least 15 people.

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Beijing Olympics

China didn't just walk onto the world stage. It soared over it.

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L.A. prosecutors insist they can try Miura. **PAGE 5**

2007 tax rebates released

Beginning Saturday, some taxpayers on the islands have begun receiving their 2007 tax rebates in the mail.

This came about after Gov. Benigno R. Fitial approved the release of some $3 million in 2007 tax rebates on Friday.

The distribution, representing the first batch of 2007 tax rebate payments, will be distributed to 14,000 taxpayers.

Fitial

See TAX on Page 4

Sablan is new PSS commissioner

Hiring hinges on dropping of lawsuit vs PSS

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public Schools System's Board of Education named Rita Sablan as the new Education Commissioner Saturday at a specially scheduled meeting.

Sablan was chosen over Ambrose M. Bennett, former CNMI Board of Education teacher representative.

Board chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita

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NATIVE MEDICINE

Medicinal plants are displayed by the CNMI Forestry Division during the Native Medicine Symposium by the Inetnon Amot Natibu/Ammwelil Safeyal Faluwasch at the Man'amko Center in Garapan Saturday. Other picture shows a woman looking at the variety of medicinal seeds from Rota during the symposium. *See story on Page 3.*

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Edwards admits to affair he denied as candidate

By PETE YOST
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former presidential candidate John Edwards, who won nationwide praise and sympathy as he campaigned side by side with his cancer-stricken wife, Elizabeth, admitted in shame Friday he had had an affair with a woman who pro-

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AP

In this image taken from video and released by ABC News, Bob Woodruff interviews John Edwards Friday, Aug. 8, 2008 in Chapel Hill, N.C.

RELATED NEWS

'Other woman' is 42-year-old filmmaker.

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Edwards videos:

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?vTDjxDL00mvg&e
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?vECWwDSRF1-4-&featurerelated
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- http://www.youtube.com/watch?vWCFv0yuD-2-M&featurerelated

Around the CNMI

A welcome rally for US congressional staffers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Coalition of United Workers (CNMI) will spearhead a rally today, Sunday, at the American Memorial Park, to welcome a delegation of congressional staffers.

Acting Coalition president Rabby Syed is encouraging guest workers of all nationalities to join the welcome rally at 5:30pm.

"We are inviting everybody in the community to come and support us," Syed said.

Syed said they would be asking the visiting delegation to help long-term guest workers obtain improved immigration status in the CNMI.

The delegation—composed of staff from several committees and the office of Rep. Madeleine Bordallo—is slated to meet with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce on Monday.

Irene Tantiado, former president of the Coalition, said she will join the rally and in fact has been inviting some friends to go.

Tantiado said that, regardless of organization, she supports the Coalition's objective to remind Congress to grant long-term guest workers improved immigration status.

It was Syed who invited Tantiado to join the rally.

The Coalition has clarified that it will not intervene in political issues related to the CNMI.

Coalition board chair Rene Reyes told *Saipan Tribune* they are not going to endorse any candidate in the upcoming U.S. congressional delegate race.

"We will commend and pray for whoever candidate will support our cause, but we will not be endorsing anybody," Reyes said.

Syed said that, although Tantiado recently stepped down as their president, their goal will remain the same—improved immigration status for long-term guest workers.

Syed said they would soon elect a new leader for the group.

The acting president said they congratulate Tantiado for deciding to continue being an advocate for guest workers' rights.

"As a self-advocate, if her aim is for the improved immigration status for long-term guest workers, we will support her," Syed said.

Human Dignity president and Coalition member Jerry Custodio said they want to only focus on the "very important issue" of improved immigration status.

'Delegation's visit is good opportunity for dialogue'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero said the visit of a delegation of U.S. congressional staffers is a good opportunity for the CNMI to open up dialogue.

Deleon Guerrero

"I look forward to any dialogue with the federal government. If they can pay for their fare to come here rather than us going there, that is even better," Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*.

By holding a dialogue, he said, this will help the CNMI explore technical assistance and keep the visiting delegation abreast of the Commonwealth's problems.

"I think the only way they are finding out [the problems] is by reading the papers. Thankfully, there are online papers," the vice speaker said.

The delegation will be on Saipan Monday to discuss key issues relating to the forthcoming federalization of the local immigration rules.

The delegation is composed of Rep. Madeleine Bordallo (Guam) and staff of several committees. The delegation members are set to meet with Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Saipan Chamber of Commerce officials.

Deleon Guerrero said it is expected that there will be discussions on what the CNMI is doing about its problems and what assistance the government may get from the federal side.

He added that it is always good to sit down on the same table with a federal delegation.

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CNMI priest is told to stop presenting self as LI priest

BY BART JONES
NEWSDAY

The Diocese of Rockville Centre has expelled a priest brought here for the last eight summers by Msgr. James Lisante without the diocese's knowledge, and who was suspended recently by his home diocese in the Northern Mariana Islands.

The Rev. Matthew Blockley, who assisted Lisante, a Fox-News commentator, apparently outraged some parishioners in Lisante's new parish in Massapequa Park and has been ordered by Bishop William Murphy to immediately cease presenting himself as a priest on Long Island.

After learning Blockley was working here without authorization, the bishop also ordered him to cease celebrating public Masses here, Rockville Centre spokesman Sean Dolan said Friday. Murphy then instructed Blockley to immediately return to his home diocese in the Northern Mariana Islands.

"He's no longer in the diocese and he will not be coming back to the diocese," Dolan said. He said Blockley left for the Northern Marianas in the last week or so. Originally from the United Kingdom, Blockley could not be reached for comment Friday.

Lisante acknowledged he should have followed church rules and acted more aggressively to get official permission for Blockley to work here, although he noted the rules were not as strict in 2000—when Blockley first arrived—as they became after the 2002 sex abuse scandal.

Visiting priests must be vetted to ensure there are no problems in their backgrounds.

"No one in the world is saying Father Matthew has done anything wrong," Lisante said. "Father Matthew is a good priest, a hardworking priest. ... There was no issue of faith or morals."

Dolan said he could not comment on whether Lisante was disciplined by Murphy. He said for the last eight years the Diocese of Rockville Centre essentially did not know Blockley was operating here.

He said Blockley was suspended by his bishop in the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa in the Northern Marianas apparently because he did not re-

See CNMI on Page 4

Two bills seek to streamline Fund's operation

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

House Floor leader Joseph James N. Camacho on Friday introduced two sister bills that are designed to streamline the NMI Retirement Fund for better revenue collection and more efficient system.

At present, the Fund's board of trustees wears three hats: as trustees for the Retirement, as board of the Group Health & Life Insurance Program for the CNMI government, and commissioners for the Worker's Compensation Commission.

House Bill 16-138 seeks to transfer the administrative functions of the Workers Compensation Commission to the Department of Commerce by amending the Worker's Compensation Law.

House Bill 16-139 proposes the transfer of the administrative functions of the GHLI Program to the Department of Finance by amending the NMI Retirement Fund Act.

Camacho told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that monitoring the Workers Compensation Commission can best be handled by the Department of Commerce so that it can be a "one-stop function."

"When a person is applying for a business license, the Worker's Compensation fees can also be completed at the same time," said the floor leader in an e-mail.

Under this bill, a person no longer needs to go to Commerce for the business license then to go to the Fund to pay for the Worker's Compensation fees, he said.

"It streamlines the process and makes for better revenue collection," the lawyer-turned-lawmaker said.

Under the legislation, the Commerce Secretary or a designee shall serve as the administrator of the Workers' Compensation Commission.

In the event the Commerce Secretary fails to designate an administrator, the bills says the Secretary shall function as the administrator and select no less than five additional employees of Commerce to function as the Workers Compensation Commission.

With respect to the second bill, Camacho said the GHLI has essentially been privatized and no longer requires the oversight of the Fund's board of trustees.

"[Since] CNMI government employees generally pay for their health and life insurance and the Department of Finance is the gatekeeper on payroll deductions to pay for these insurances, the Department of Finance is best suited as the agency to handle GHLI," he said.

This, Camacho said, will streamline the process as Finance will remit directly to the insurance provider.

Under the proposed measure, the Finance Secretary will have the expenditure authority over the trust fund, and shall report to the Legislature and to the governor on the financial status of the trust fund no later than 60 days after the end of each fiscal year.

Panelists: Traditional, modern medicine can work side by side

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Traditional medicine and modern medicine can co-exist, but the *man'amko* must pass down their methods to younger generations, panelists with traditional medicine knowledge said Saturday.

Seven panelists were part of the Inetnon Amot Natibu/Ammwelil Safeyal Faluwasch Native Medicine Symposium held at the Man'amko Center.

"Traditional healers need to speak up and share their information to medical doctors," Ignacia T. Demapan said, reading excerpts from an essay she wrote.

She said indigenous citizens need to document their healing methods.

"In this way, traditional medicine will be able to be recognized in our health care system," Demapan, who is working toward her Ph.D in psychology, said.

Apprenticeships or schools are a good way to pass the knowledge to younger generations, Demapan told the crowd of approximately 30 people.

Sen. Maria Frica Pangelinan said that, like modern medicine, users must believe in the healing powers for traditional medicine to work. But caution needs to be used as well, she added.

"Just because it's a local medicine, we think it's all good," she said. "It should be used with guides and instruction."

Dr. Daniel C. Lamar spoke of his admiration for plants. "I developed a relationship with plants," said Lamar, who is a medical doctor but also studied botanical medicine. "I think of them as spiritual beings. There are a lot of plants that have some way touched my soul."

Plants need to be studied and learned about, he said. "Plants are alive," he said. "They are a part of our spiritual world as well as our visual world. And we need to try to understand them in that way."

When an audience member asked about homebirths, Pangelinan said the practice was initially used because there was no alternative. If homebirths were to become more common, there would need to be safety regulations.

"As of right now, the hospital is still the safest place," she added.

Lamar, who said he has delivered numerous babies at home, said there must be training involved with a homebirth. "The question of safety is the biggest issue," he said.

Studies have shown that homebirths are as safe as hospitals births, but extra caution must be taken—not just for the baby, but for the mother as well, Lamar said.

"Women must have more screening and be watched closely," he said.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
COMMONWEALTH BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Commonwealth Board of Nurse Examiners Board of Directors, is hereby giving notice that the Board will be having a **Special Meeting** on Monday, August 11, 2008, 1:00 pm at the Commonwealth Health Center's Conference Room at the new wing.

AGENDA

I. **Preliminary Matters –**
   1. Roll Call
II. **Call to Order**
III. **Emergency licensing authorization for Tinian Health Center and A. Long, NP**

/s/ Elaine Marie Camacho, RN
Chairperson, CBNE Board of Directors

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Tax rebates are now in the mail

From Page 1

According to Finance Secretary Eloy S. Inos, taxpayers could now pick up their checks in the mail beginning yesterday, while others will get their checks Monday.

Inos said the government will begin distributing 2007 tax rebate checks regularly, initially beginning every two weeks and then on a weekly basis every Friday.

Following the complete disbursement of 2007 tax rebates, the government will go back and ensure the full payment of all 2006 and 2005 rebates.

The issuance of the 2007 tax rebates comes on the heels of the release of some $3 million in 2007 tax refunds last month.

As with the tax refunds, federal stimulus checks, and child tax credits previously released by the Fitial administration, the governor also expects the tax refund and rebate releases to have a positive effect on local consumers and struggling small businesses.

"I am very happy we are able to return money back to our taxpayers on a timely basis," said Fitial.

"This is a high priority," said the Governor. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Edwards denies fathering child with woman

From Page 1

duced videos as he prepared to launch his campaign.

Acknowledging a sex scandal he had dismissed as "tabloid trash" only last month, Edwards said he had told his wife and family long ago, but "I had hoped that it would never become public."

He denied fathering a daughter, born to the woman with whom he had the affair, and offered to be tested to prove it. A former Edwards campaign staff member professes to be the father.

The former North Carolina senator, who was the Democratic vice presidential nominee in 2004, confessed to ABC News that he had lied repeatedly about the affair with Rielle Hunter, then 42. Hunter's daughter, Frances Quinn Hunter, was born on Feb. 27 this year, and no father's name is given on the birth certificate filed in California.

In a statement provided to The Associated Press, Elizabeth Edwards confirmed that her husband had confessed the extramarital affair to her in 2006 but that after a "long and painful process" she was now standing by him.

After the story broke Friday, Edwards released a statement that said, "In 2006, I made a serious error in judgment and conducted myself in a way that was disloyal to my family and to my core beliefs. I recognized my mistake, and I told my wife that I had a liaison with another woman, and I asked for her forgiveness. Although I was honest in every painful detail with my family, I did not tell the public."

"I was and am ashamed of my conduct and choices," he said. "With my family, I took responsibility for my actions in 2006, and today I take full responsibility publicly."

Edwards declared his presidential candidacy in December 2006. His wife campaigned enthusiastically with him and by herself in the months that followed. She announced in March 2007 that her cancer, formerly in remission, had returned and there apparently was no cure.

She and her husband said it was important for the campaign to continue.

Edwards dropped out midway through this year's primaries after it became apparent he could not keep up with front-runners Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton. He recently endorsed Obama and has been mentioned as a possible running mate.

Speaking to reporters Friday in Honolulu, Obama praised Edwards as a "great champion of working people" during the campaign and said the couple indicated they would probably not attend the Democratic National Convention in Denver later this month.

"This is a difficult and painful time to them," Obama said. "And I think they need to work through that process of healing. My sense is that that's going to be their top priority."

Edwards was John Kerry's running mate in 2004 when Kerry lost to President Bush.

In his statement, he said, "It is inadequate to say to the people who believed in me that I am sorry, as it is inadequate to say to the people who love me that I am sorry.

"In the course of several campaigns, I started to believe that I was special and became increasingly egocentric and narcissistic. If you want to beat me up feel free. You cannot beat me up more than I have already beaten up myself. I have been stripped bare and will now work with everything I have to help my family and others who need my help."

In her statement Friday, Elizabeth Edwards said it wasn't easy to find out about the extramarital affair in 2006. She called the affair a "terrible mistake" but said the healing process was "oddly made somewhat easier" after her diagnosis of breast cancer in March 2007.

"This was our private matter, and I frankly wanted it to be private because as painful as it was I did not want to have to play it out on a public stage as well," she said. "Because of a recent string of hurtful and absurd lies in a tabloid publication, because of a picture falsely suggesting that John was spending time with a child it wrongly alleged he had fathered outside our marriage, our private matter could no longer be wholly private."

Mrs. Edwards said her family has been through a lot and pleaded for privacy.

"I am proud of the courage John showed by his honesty in the face of shame," she said. "I ask that the public, who expressed concern about the harm John's conduct has done to us, think also about the real harm that the present voyeurism does and give me and my family the privacy we need at this time."

The National Enquirer first reported on the affair in October 2007, in the run-up to the Democratic primaries, and Edwards denied it.

"The story is false," he told reporters then. "It's completely untrue, ridiculous." He professed his love for his wife, who had an incurable form of cancer, saying, "I've been in love with the same woman for 30-plus years and as anybody who's been around us knows, she's an extraordinary human being, warm, loving, beautiful, sexy and as good a person as I have ever known. So the story's just false."

Last month, the Enquirer carried another story—the blaring headline referred to an Edwards "love child"—stating that its reporters had accosted Edwards in a Los Angeles hotel where he had met with Hunter after her child's birth. Edwards called it "tabloid trash," but he generally avoided reporters' inquiries, as did his former top aides.

He said in his statement Friday he had "used the fact that the story contained many falsities to deny it," and he called that "being 99 percent honest."

In an interview, scheduled to air on ABC News' "Nightline" Friday night, Edwards said the tabloid was correct when it reported on his meeting with Hunter at the Beverly Hills Hilton last month.

A number of mainstream news organizations had looked into the adultery allegations but had not published or aired stories. But newspapers in Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C., recounted the Enquirer's allegations in prominent articles on Thursday.

The Edwardses have three children—Cate, Jack and Emma Claire. Another son, Wade, died at 16 in a 1996 car accident.

David Bonior, Edwards' campaign manager for his 2008 presidential bid, said he was disappointed and angry at Friday's news.

"Thousands of friends of the senator's and his supporters have put their faith and confidence in him, and he's let them down," said Bonior, a former congressman from Michigan. "They've been betrayed by his action."

Asked whether the affair would damage Edwards' future aspirations in public service, Bonior replied: "You can't lie in politics and expect to have people's confidence."

CBS News chief White House correspondent Bob Schieffer spoke to John and Elizabeth Edwards on Friday afternoon. Schieffer reported that when Elizabeth got on the phone, "she was obviously in tears" and that she said "this is really, really tough," but she confirmed Edwards told her about the affair in 2006 and the couple had decided to "move on." When Schieffer asked John Edwards how his wife was doing, he said "she is just amazing, like she always is."

In his statement, Edwards denied making any payments to Hunter or "or to the apparent father of the baby." Late Friday, Dallas-based attorney Fred Baron, former national finance chairman for Edwards, said in a statement he decided on his own to "help two friends and former colleagues rebuild their lives when harassment by supermarket tabloids made it impossible for them to move forward on their own."

Baron, who did not return messages left by The Associated Press, didn't mention anyone by name in his statement. He said the assistance was offered and accepted without the knowledge of Edwards or anyone else.

In 1999, when Edwards was a senator, he said of President Clinton and his affair with Monica Lewinsky:

"I think this president has shown a remarkable disrespect for his office, for the moral dimensions of leadership, for his friends, for his wife, for his precious daughter. It is breathtaking to me the level to which that disrespect has risen."

In 2006, Edwards' political action committee paid $100,000 in a four-month span to a newly formed firm run by Hunter, who directed the production of four Web videos showing Edwards in supposedly candid moments as well as in a public speech talking about morality.

The payments from Edwards' One America Committee to Midline Groove Productions LLC started on July 5, 2006, five days after Hunter incorporated the firm in Delaware.

Midline provided "Website/Internet services," according to reports that Edwards' PAC filed with the Federal Election Commission.

Midline's work product consists of four YouTube videos showing Edwards in informal settings as he prepares to make speeches in Storm Lake, Iowa, and Pittsburgh, as he prepares for an appearance on "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart" and travels in Uganda in 2006.

Edwards' PAC followed the six-figure payment with two smaller payments totaling $14,461, the last on April 1, 2007.

At the time, Hunter was compiling the videos in 2006, Edwards was preparing his run for president.

Episode One of the four videos shows a conversation between Edwards and an unseen woman as the two chat aboard a plane about an upcoming speech in Storm Lake, Iowa.

Cutting between clips of the speech and the conversation with the woman, Edwards touches on his standard political themes, declaring that government must do a better job of addressing the great issues of the day, from poverty and education to jobs and the war in Iraq.

"I want to see our party lead on the great moral issues—yes, me a Democrat using that word—the great moral issues that face our country," Edwards tells the crowd. "If we want to live in a moral, honest just America and if we want to live in a moral and just world, we can't wait for somebody else to do it. We have to do it."

CNMI

From Page 2

spond to the bishop's instructions to return home. Lisante said Blockley had worked in the Philippines since around 2000 after a falling out with his local bishop.

In 2004, the bishop, Tomas Camacho, placed an announcement in the Archdiocese of Miami's pastoral bulletin asking for assistance in locating Blockley. Camacho did not respond to telephone messages this week.

Lisante, who violated church policy by endorsing John McCain for president in May, said he originally met Blockley at a religion conference in California in 2000 and encouraged him to come to Long Island to provide summer help.

Some parishioners at Our Lady of Lourdes in Massapequa Park, an extremely conservative parish, said they were angered by some of Blockley's actions, including his removal of a statue of Our Lady of Fatima from the altar. The statue had been in place for 25 years and was a symbol of the parish's orthodox spirituality.

Lisante, who became the parish's pastor June 25, bringing Blockley with him, called the protests an overreaction, and said it was another priest who removed the statue.

BOE selects Sablan as new commissioner

From Page 1

said that Sablan, former PSS associate commissioner for Curriculum and Instruction, was chosen "due to the depth of her knowledge and experience in education as shown by her application packet and interview responses."

The Commissioner of Education reports to the Board of Education and is in charge of all operations for the Public School System.

In order to take office, Sablan must reach an agreement with the Board over a lawsuit she filed in 2006 against the BOE and three past members, Blanco-Maratita said.

Sablan sued after David Borja was named COE over her. In June, Borja was ordered by the board to resign or be fired.

Blanco-Maratita said the lawsuit did not play a part in Sablan's selection.

Blanco-Maratita said Sablan was chosen as COE this time and not last time because of the makeup of the board.

"There were different members of the board," she said. "I don't think it ever got to the point of evaluation with the last board."

The Board of Education conducted the 50-question interviews with Sablan and Bennett on Wednesday. Blanco-Maratita said Sablan came out on top with her understanding of the school system.

"Ms. Sablan came ahead, particularly in her development and implementation of standards and benchmarks," she said.

As Commissioner, Sablan will hold the position for four years with annual reviews. She will have a yearly salary of $70,000.

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L.A. prosecutors insisting they could still try Miura for murder

By LINDA DEUTSCH
AP SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LOS ANGELES (AP)—California prosecutors insisted Friday that a Japanese businessman can be prosecuted for the 1981 murder of his wife in Los Angeles even though he was acquitted of the crime in Japan.

In a 60-page court filing, prosecutors said Kazuyoshi Miura cannot claim double jeopardy because he never entered a plea under California law and was not tried here.

At the time of the killing, California law barred prosecution of someone already tried in a foreign jurisdiction. However, that law was changed in 2005.

Attorney Mark Geragos, who is representing Miura, said the prosecution motions are a rehash of arguments made earlier.

"I feel their pain, but this case is over. He was already acquitted in a foreign jurisdiction," Geragos said.

Lead prosecutor Alan Jackson declined to comment beyond the filings.

He and his legal team argued that even if the charge of murder is barred under double jeopardy provisions, Miura can be tried for conspiracy to kill his wife because he was not convicted or acquitted of that crime in Japan.

Geragos countered that papers in the Japanese case clearly refer to the charge against his client as conspiracy.

Prosecutors, however, presented an affidavit from a professor fluent in Japanese who said the translation of Japanese court documents shows Miura was never charged with or tried for conspiracy there.

The Miura case has been a cause celebre in Japan, where it was dubbed the "Japanese O.J. case."

Memories of the murder have lingered in Los Angeles, where the case has been the subject of thinly disguised fictional TV dramas.

The 60-year-old Miura, a clothing importer, said he was shot along with his wife in a street crime. He held news conferences denouncing Los Angeles as an unsafe city for tourists.

His wife died of her injuries, and he returned to Japan and collected $700,000 on three separate insurance policies on her life.

But Japanese authorities took another look at the case and Miura was tried and convicted of the murder in 1994. That conviction was overturned by the Tokyo High Court in 1998 and Miura was freed.

He was arrested on the California charges in February when he entered the U.S. territory of Saipan. Miura remains in custody, with a hearing scheduled Aug. 15 on whether he can be extradited to the United States.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Beijing's Games

There was a certain stage-managed quality to President Bush's mini-clash with China over human rights this week. The words he employed were indeed strong: "The United States believes the people of China deserve the fundamental liberty that is the natural right of all human beings," Bush declared. "So America stands in firm opposition to China's detention of political dissidents, human rights advocates and religious activists." Yet he spoke these words not on Chinese soil but in democratic Thailand. They came near the end of a broader address in which the president touched on many Asian subjects and offered countervailing praise for Chinese cooperation on international issues. The president released his text well in advance, giving Beijing plenty of time to respond. "We firmly oppose any words or acts that interfere in other countries' internal affairs, using human rights and religion and other issues," the Communist government replied—and promptly returned to preparations for the Olympic Opening Ceremonies, which Bush and other Western leaders will attend.

On with the Games! Undoubtedly, Friday is a moment of great pride not only for those who rule China but for many ordinary Chinese as well, as the achievements of their economy and their athletes go on display. But we say this without a sense of certainty, because the true opinion of China's people is difficult to gauge. What they know about their country and the rest of the world is filtered through the distorting lens of propaganda and censorship. And for those who exhibit excessive curiosity, or excessive outspokenness, the consequences—loss of work, ostracism, prison—can be dire. So we wonder: How many Chinese inwardly seethe at the pollution hovering over their capital? How many anguish at the forced relocation of thousands of Beijing residents to make way for Olympic venues? How many harbor unexpressed anger at the detention of peaceful dissidents—a flat violation of their government's promise that hosting the Olympics would bring greater respect for human rights?

We look forward to the Games' high competitive drama and the sheer physical beauty of top-flight sports, and we hope the Games go smoothly. Yet wonderful as it may be, this quadrennial spectacle, the first in which all countries of the "Olympic movement" have met in the capital of an authoritarian country since the 1936 Berlin Olympiad, comes at a price. We do not refer to the $866 million in fees that 12 multinational corporations have paid for the privilege of sponsoring the show. We do not even mean, exactly, the price that Beijing is imposing on muzzled dissidents and other persons it deems inconsistent with a harmonious extravaganza. Rather, it's the intangible cost that these two weeks of Olympian international comity will exact on the cause of democracy itself. That cause can only seem a bit weaker—a bit more hypocritical—if, for the sake of a transitory "Olympic spirit," we avoid, or play down, issues of human freedom that are far more consequential than any gold.

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LAURA, I'VE THOUGHT OF SOMETHING WE CAN LEAVE BEHIND AS A HOUSEWARMING GIFT FOR MY SUCCESSOR....
DEFICIT
2008
SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS

Justice taking an unfortunate detour

By ROSA BROOKS
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Brooks is a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center. E-mail her at rbrooks@latimescolumnists.com.

The president's military commissions were inaugurated with the loftiest rhetoric.

On Nov. 13, 2001, President Bush issued a military order authorizing trials of suspected terrorists before military commissions. Terrorists, the president warned, might cause "mass deaths and ... place at risk the continuity of the operations of the United States government." And only military commissions would suffice to bring terrorists to justice, because "given the danger to the safety of the United States" and the unique "nature" of terrorism, "it is not practicable to apply ... the principles of law and the rules of evidence generally recognized in the trial of criminal cases in the United States district courts."

So how are those commissions working out for you, Mr. President?

On Wednesday, after 6 1/2 years of controversy and delay, the administration finally scored a "victory" in a military commission trial at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, gaining the conviction of one terrorist mastermind.

Osama bin Laden, you ask?

Ah, no. He's still living it up somewhere in Pakistan, enjoying a good chuckle at our expense.

Wednesday instead saw the conviction of Salim Ahmed Hamdan, who fessed up to being ... bin Laden's driver. He was accordingly convicted of the "war crime" of "providing material support for terrorism." Next up before the military commissions: bin Laden's pastry chef, for providing culinary support to terrorism.

Just kidding! But among those next up for trial at Guantanamo — seriously — are two other uniquely dangerous terrorist masterminds, Omar Khadr and Mohammed Jawad. Khadr, a Canadian, was all of 15 years old when he allegedly lobbed a hand grenade at U.S. troops during a July 2002 firefight in Afghanistan. He now has spent more than a quarter of his short life in U.S. detention. Jawad, an Afghan, is also accused of throwing a grenade at U.S. troops in Afghanistan. He was 16 or 17 at the time of the December 2002 incident, and, like Khadr, he's been in U.S. detention ever since.

To be fair, the military commission system does have another conviction to its credit: Early in 2007, Australian citizen David Hicks, a Taliban supporter who was turned over to U.S. forces by Afghanistan's Northern Alliance for a $1,000 bounty, pleaded guilty to a charge of "material support for terrorism." He was returned to Australia, where he served out a nine-month sentence and is now free.

Don't get me wrong: al-Qaida is one of the most appalling organizations ever to blight this Earth, and the Taliban is little better. Military responses to terrorism are at times necessary, and U.S. troops have every right to incapacitate or detain those who lob hand grenades at them. Bin Laden's driver may well deserve to remain locked up.

But are these guys really the worst of the worst, evil terrorist masterminds who so threaten "the continuity of the operations of the United States government" that they couldn't possibly be tried in U.S. civilian courts?

After 6 1/2 years — after detaining hundreds of people at Guantanamo, after trying interrogation techniques adapted from the Chinese and the KGB, after countless protests from the International Committee for the Red Cross, after alienating close allies and creating a cause celebre for our enemies — have the military commissions really been worth it?

Wednesday's conviction of Hamdan might not even survive appeal. Hamdan was convicted of the "war crime" of providing "material support" for terrorism. But there's no international law precedent for viewing the provision of material support for terrorism as a "war crime." That fact will allow Hamdan's defense team to argue, on appeal, that the military commissions didn't properly have jurisdiction over those charges. (Hamdan was acquitted of conspiracy charges, but those charges probably will be faced by other detainees and will confront a similar challenge).

None of this bodes well for the ability of military commissions to successfully try the few bigger fish at Guantanamo, such as Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who probably did play a key role in planning the 9/11 attacks. And the irony is that while the military commissions have been tied up in knots, obsessed with small fry, the federal courts have been humming along, trying and convicting dozens of genuinely dangerous terrorists, including 9/11 plotter Zacarias Moussaoui and shoe-bomber Richard Reid.

It's like those signs advertising housing developments to commuters stuck in traffic: "If you lived here, you'd be home now." Odds are, if the administration had stuck to the tried and true federal court system, it would be home now — and most of the Guantanamo detainees suspected of serious crimes would have been tried and convicted by now too.

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We're still in love with the romance of China's past

By NICOLE MONES
Special to The Washington Post

Mones' most recent novel is The Last Chinese Chef.

Been to China lately? There are a lot of new things to see. Avant-garde monoliths—the China Central Television (CCTV) tower, the National Center for Performing Arts and the National Stadium, to name just three—rise in Beijing. Shanghai's skyline looks like a fantasy straight out of "The Jetsons." Guangzhou has been transformed almost beyond recognition.

China has spent the last 15 years rebuilding its cities to be aggressively, almost desperately, modern. As the Summer Olympics focus the world's attention on the Middle Kingdom, its new architecture is turning cartwheels to send the message: Look. We've arrived.

But Americans and other tourists rarely bother with these monuments to the future, instead seeking out historical sites. I did the same when I first traveled to China to start a textile business in 1977. I constantly photographed rice paddies and water buffalo, even as embarrassed Chinese tried to redirect my attention to what then passed for modern buildings and factories.

I wanted the China I saw in my mind, romantic and mysterious. I was like Henry Kissinger, who described his secret meetings with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai in 1971 in his memoirs. At their first encounter, the American diplomat was offering up a starry-eyed speech about coming to this "mysterious land" when Zhou stopped him. "You will find it not mysterious. When you have become familiar with it, it will not be as mysterious as before."

Exactly. Yet 37 years later, Americans and the West cling to the mystery of China in a way that may be preventing us from seeing the nation as the complex new world it has become. It's a world growing at warp speed and struggling to reconcile an unstoppable flow of information, money and personal desires with a heavy-handed form of governance. It's a world we Americans need to understand. Unfortunately, we prefer a nostalgic, exotic, vanished land.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the narrative arts. As an American who did business in China for 18 years before beginning to write novels about contemporary China, I feel the tension between the romance and the reality. When I do book signings, the first audience question is often a wistful one: Is anything left of the old, traditional China? Anything at all?

It's revealing that the movies and novels about China that are popular in the West are rarely popular in China, and vice versa. Our two cultures are immersed in opposing images and stories about what China is, which distracts us from more complicated and subtle realities. Americans tend to be drawn to films that feature martial arts, opium dens, concubines, picturesque old cities and war-torn lovers. An especially pointed example is "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," a film suffused with the yearning for a lost homeland that director Ang Lee absorbed growing up in Taiwan, a land of exile. "The film," Lee has said, "is a dream of China, a China that probably never existed, except in my boyhood fantasies."

Directors Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige have made many films, but they've reached American moviegoers mainly through works about the past, such as "Raise the Red Lantern," "Farewell My Concubine" and "Red Sorghum." Their films about life in China today, including "The Story of Qiu Ju," "Together," "King of the Children" and "Not One Less," earned respectful reviews but hardly did gangbusters at the U.S. box office.

Contemporary fiction set in China follows suit. Asian American writers such as Gail Tsukiyama, Lisa See and Amy Tan have achieved popular success almost entirely by setting their stories in the China of foot-binding, silk workers, cloistered women and classic operas. Critics have been as pleased as readers, who flock to these stories as authors rush to create more of them. The result has been the rise of a new, nostalgic genre, something like the Western—highly popular, but about China. Call it the Eastern.

The leading emigre writers Ha Jin and Anchee Min also write mainly about the past, but they've developed a less romantic branch of our old-China narrative, what I think of as its dark side: stories of Communist-era suffering. Americans love the Cultural Revolution the way we love a good villain in a horror story. Dai Sijie tweaked this form to great success in his novel "Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress" by giving Western literature the power to transform Chinese lives. We love seeing our own cultural traditions ride to the rescue. Predictably, Dai's next novel, "Mr. Muo's Travelling Couch," which left the Cultural Revolution behind to take a clever look at the modern Chinese psyche, sold only modestly in the United States.

In China, meanwhile, novelistic explorations of the Cultural Revolution can seem dated. China's "wound literature" of the late 1970s and the "root-searching literature" of the early 1980s aired this collective trauma at a time when everybody you met on a train had a sad story to tell. As this cultural trend played out, China seemed to process the horrors of recent history and move on.

If Chinese fiction fans aren't obsessing over the Cultural Revolution or romantic Easterns, what are they reading? There's a clue in recent million-selling novels featuring carnivalistic explorations of Chinese urban life today, with its instant gratifications and ennui. Wang Shuo's "Playing for Thrills" tells the story of a shiftless former soldier who gambles, drinks, pursues women and may have been involved in a murder, while Wei Hui's "Shanghai Baby" follows a hedonistic young woman as she tries to find herself in a world of clubs, sex and brand names. These louche-lifestyle novels, huge hits in China, were released with considerable fanfare in the United States, where they caused barely a ripple. They aren't Easterns. They aren't the China stories Americans want.

Nevertheless, brave publishers continue to introduce contemporary Chinese writers, attempting, book by book, to open the door on what China is today. Two forthcoming titles seem to have at least a chance of attracting America's attention. Xiaolu Guo's "Twenty Fragments of a Ravenous Youth" is the story of a young migrant woman who tries to build a life in Beijing—an iconic storyline in China today, where the "floating population" exceeds 100 million. The author's last novel to appear in English, "A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers," was shortlisted last year for the United Kingdom's Orange prize, awarded to the best new novel in English by a woman. "China High," by the pseudonymous ZZ, is the debut memoir of a young Chinese-born, American-educated man I know who was riding a wave of success as a Beijing attorney a few years back when he got arrested for recreational drug use. Stuck in a Chinese prison, frantically texting friends on the outside for help and mentally revisiting his life, he comes to know and be affected by the motley unfortunates who crowd his concrete cell—con men, thieves, a transsexual prostitute. Asked to explain his title, ZZ has said: "You think you know China? Take a hit of this."

We'll see whether the West is ready for stories like these, for a new narrative tradition that presents this wildly contradictory, fast-growing, crucially important country as it actually is—a country of good and bad, old ways and new, with as many facets as its 1.3 billion people.

You may wonder whether I'm putting my money where my mouth is. After three books set in modern China, am I doing anything to help? Dear reader, forgive me. I'm writing a historical novel.

Maybe foreign oil isn't so bad after all

By JOEL STEIN
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Stein is a columnist for the Times. E-mail him at jstein@latimescolumnists.com.

There are many things I want independence from—incoming e-mail, the section of my wedding vows about monogamy, this bogus corporation I created to lower my taxes but now takes up all of my time, Sam Zell—but foreign oil is not one of them. Foreign oil is my favorite kind of oil. It means other nations clog their beaches with ugly rigs, do dangerous work and suffer environmental disasters and I still get to cruise Hollywood in my yellow Mini Cooper convertible. Oil exploration is an industry America should look to expand right after alchemy research and pyramid building.

Yet Barack Obama and John McCain, in speeches and ads, have spent time arguing about who is most serious about achieving independence from foreign energy. Both are willing to drill offshore even though that won't produce more gasoline until long after we all own electric cars. And both want to relieve gas prices by tapping the government's Strategic Petroleum Reserve, despite the fact that there's no emergency and higher prices are the only thing that has been effective at getting Americans to curb consumption of foreign oil. The only smart thing I heard was Obama's advice to fully inflate your tires, although he overlooked the fact that gas stations no longer have free air pumps or even decent pay ones. I'm surprised he didn't tell us to save gas by not getting lost with the aid of free Amoco maps.

If the candidates wanted to be independent from all oil, I would embrace that green goal. But they hate only foreign oil. As if foreign oil was inherently different from good, God-fearing, strong-work-ethic American oil, the kind that is ignited by freedom and burns terrorism and France. To the commodities market, there is no American oil, no American cotton, no American aluminum, no American coffee—they all get bid on without national prejudice. Even I know that, and my academic study of commodities consists solely of watching "Trading Places."

If we were energy independent, the politicians imply, prices wouldn't go up. But if you're an oil-striking American dude—maybe a little naive but smart enough to know that your hot daughter Elly May is going to be better off in Beverly Hills than the Ozarks—you're going to shop your barrels to the highest bidder, not just to whiny Americans with their near-worthless dollars. More oil procured from under U.S. soil means more oil on the global market, not more oil for just us.

And yet the candidates talk as if the U.S. were one giant energy-buying socialist entity that can choose exactly where all its oil comes from. The U.S. market consists of millions of individual global transactions, some of which you make at the gas station. According to the federal Energy Information Administration, the U.S. bought oil from 90 countries and exported oil to 73 in 2007.

A country is not stronger if it produces everything itself. Econ 101 teaches you that everyone benefits when people who are good at one thing, such as having oil, can exchange it with people who are good at something else, such as sitting in offices and surfing the Web.

And even if we cut down on imported oil, we're still dependent on other nations. We import electricity from Mexico and Canada. We import 20 percent of our natural gas and 80 percent of the uranium for nuclear reactors. All of our solar power is directly imported from the sun.

If being independent from foreign oil is good, so would being independent from foreign fish, foreign cars, foreign beer and foreign movies. Do you want to live in a world without Spanish mackerel, Priuses, Guinness or Mr. Bean?

Self-sufficiency won't make us safer either. Sure, if we went to war with Saudi Arabia and Venezuela and Russia and Mexico and Canada at once, moving our armies around would be tough, but that would be the least of our worries: We would have some kind of mob-funded, hockey-goon, masked-wrestler army at our door. Outside that scenario, energy interdependence makes us more secure. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit in 2005, for instance, we got oil to the ravaged Gulf Coast by buying extra from Venezuela and the Netherlands.

Robert Bryce, author of the new book "Gusher of Lies: The Dangerous Delusions of Energy Independence," is sure the presidential candidates know all of this. "The rhetoric is helping to support multibillion-dollar boondoggles like the ethanol scam," he said. "When they say, 'energy independence,' they mean, 'Vote for me.' It's all it means."

The only solution to our energy panic, I believe, is to get monthly bills for gasoline, just like we do for water, electricity and cell-phone minutes. All that staring at those hundredths of a cent speeding by on a gauge is bound to make people crazy, lashing out at foreigners and large corporations. If bartenders attached one of those things to their taps, we would have candidates promising independence from foreign beer too.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Light and variable winds.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph becoming east by evening.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°

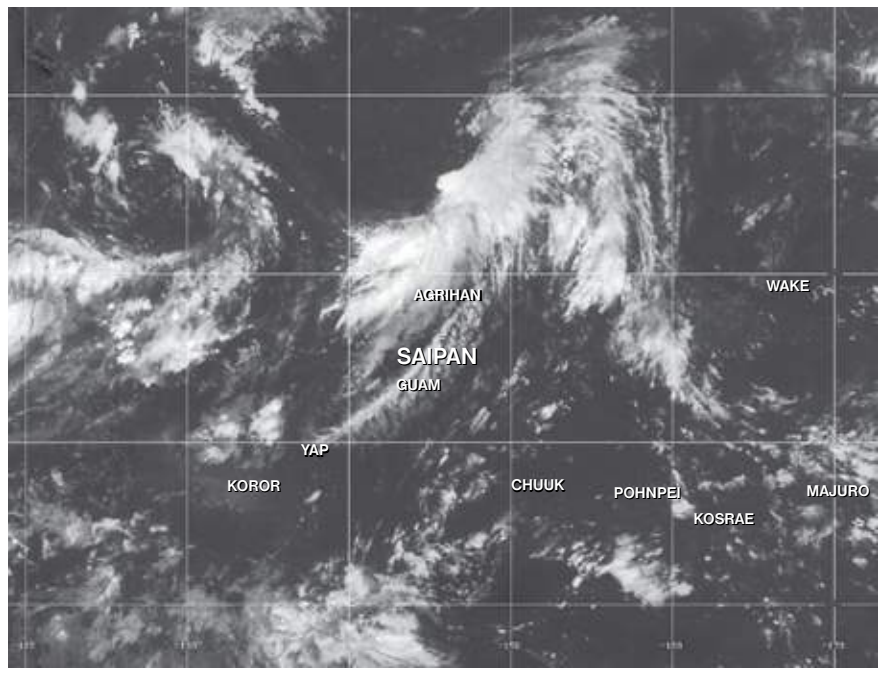
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲86	▼77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼73
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Majuro	Cloudy	▲86	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲57	▼49
Beijing	Thundershowers	▲84	▼73
Hong Kong	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲85	▼76
London	Showers	▲72	▼57
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲82	▼64
Manila	Thundershowers	▲86	▼77
Melbourne	Thundershowers	▲48	▼41
Miami	Thundershowers	▲91	▼77
New York	Partly Sunny	▲79	▼66
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲93	▼75
Paris	Rain	▲73	▼59
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲90	▼75
Rome	Sunny	▲87	▼64
Salem	Sunny	▲79	▼54
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲72	▼57
Seoul	Thundershowers	▲91	▼75
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲91	▼81
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲85	▼68

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2008
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Trade wind convergence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms in two areas. One area is south of Koror and Yap between 1N and 7N from 137E to 141E. The other area is south of Chuuk and Pohnpei between the equator and 5N from 146E to 160E. Convergence into a circulation near 27N148E is generating extensive cloud-cover. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over islands north of the Marianas or within 125 miles of a line extending southwestward from the circulation to 23N146E to 23N140E and also within 100 miles of a line from 19N150E to 25N154E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
12:10AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
7:50AM Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
2:58PM Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet
7:18PM Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:01AM	6:43 PM
Monday	6:02AM	6:43 PM
Tuesday	6:02AM	6:42 PM
Wednesday	6:02AM	6:42 PM
Thursday	6:02AM	6:41 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:27PM	12:02AM
Monday	2:20PM	12:48AM
Tuesday	3:11PM	1:37AM
Wednesday	4:01PM	2:29AM
Thursday	4:49AM	3:23 PM

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  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 18, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	4:00am	4:50am	Daily
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 099	5:00am	7:40am	Daily
NW 078	8:55am	2:00pm	Daily
NW 075	4:45pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:55am	11:35am	Daily

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:50am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	3:50am	7:20am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2,7
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	7:00pm	8:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Guam-Hongkong

CO 909	6:40pm	9:25pm	1,5

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	Daily
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:15am	2:55pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:30am+1	Daily
NW 100	8:45pm	1:25am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	9:00pm	1:30am+1	Daily

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:40am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2,7
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	10:55pm	4:30am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:20pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	10:35pm	5:15am+1	1,5

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio

Sunday		
	9am	Sunday school
	10am	Regular worship
	6pm	worship
Wednesday		
	7pm	worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries

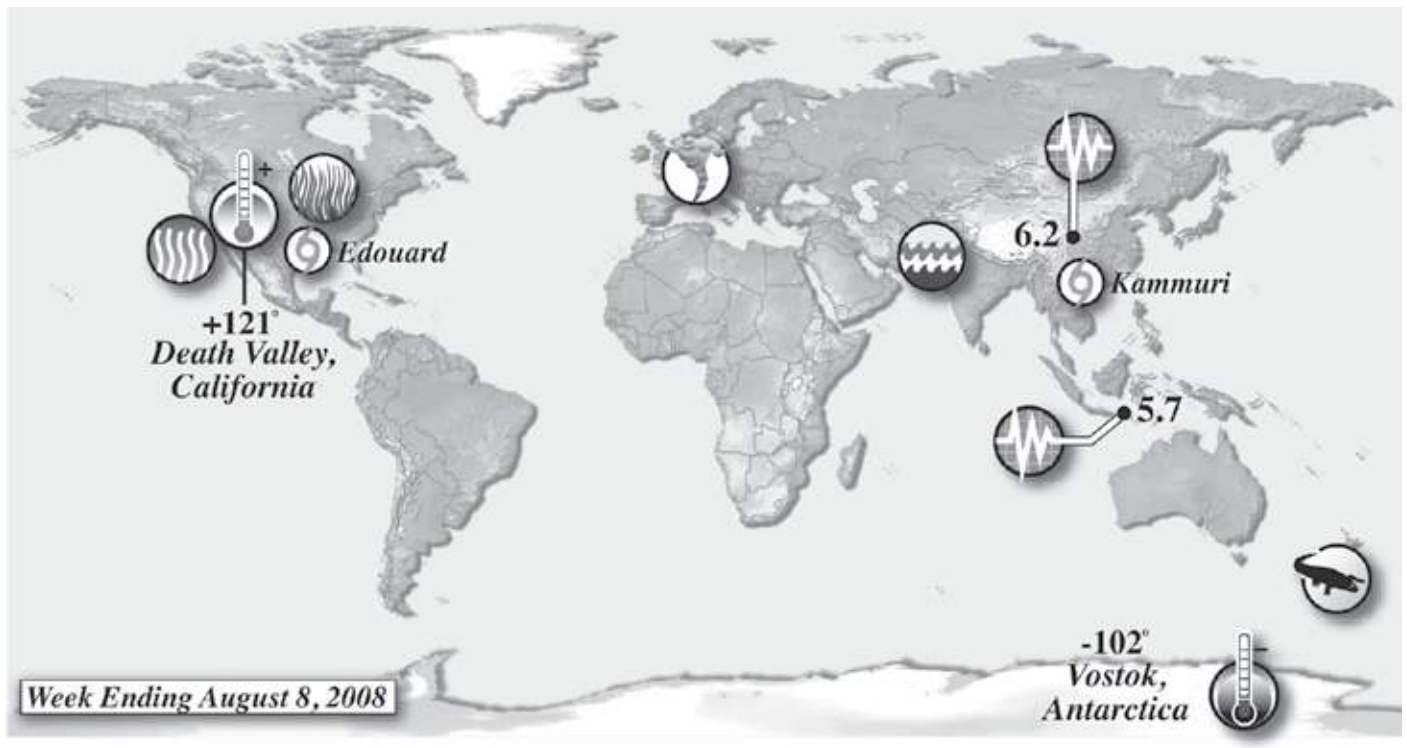
Sunday	5:30am-6:30am	
Morning prayer		
	7am-9am	English service
	7am-9am	Sunday school
	10am-12noon	English service, Koblerville
Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



'Megagrass' Biofuel

New research in the United States may have found a way to use the majority of traditional grain crops for food rather than diverting nearly a quarter of them for biofuel production. A team from the University of Illinois says the giant perennial grass *Miscanthus x giganteus* can produce far more biofuels per acre than current sources, such as corn. To achieve the current White House goal of offsetting 20 percent of gasoline use with ethanol would take about a quarter of all U.S. cropland out of food production, the researchers say. Writing in the journal *Global Change Biology*, crop sciences professor Stephen P. Long said that Miscanthus can be grown on land unsuitable for growing corn or other grains, meaning that acreage used for those crops could be once again allocated exclusively for food production. Long also wrote that Miscanthus is a perennial grass that grows up to 13 feet in height, and once planted will return each year. It also removes carbon from the atmosphere and places it into the soil far more efficiently than annual crops such as corn or soybeans.

Earthquakes

A powerful temblor killed three people, injured 22 others and wrecked scores of homes in China's quake-prone Sichuan-Gansu border region. The same region was devastated by an 8.0 magnitude earthquake on May 12 that left nearly 90,000 people dead or missing.

■ A sharp quake on Indonesia's remote Sumbawa Island destroyed more than 500 homes and damaged at least 825 others. Officials said that five people were injured during the shaking, which was centered about 160 miles east-northeast of Bali.

California Hot Spot

Geologists in Southern California are puzzled by a patch of ground that has warmed to 812 degrees Fahrenheit, igniting a brush fire that burned three acres last month. "We are a little perplexed at this point, to tell you the truth," geologist David Panaro told the Ventura County Star. This is the fifth time that the patch of steep, rugged terrain a few miles north of the town of Fillmore has become hot, according to retired U.S. Forest Service geologist Allen King. He told the Star that he has seen small plumes of smoke wafting from cracks in the ground at the site. One theory being floated for the ground being hot enough to melt glue in the soles of boots is that hydrocarbons, such as natural gas or oil, are burning beneath the surface. Scientists say they are unable to determine exactly what could have started such a fire, or how long it's been burning.

French Twister

A freak tornado wrecked more than 40 houses in northern France, killing three people and prompting one survivor to commit suicide after seeing his home destroyed. The bodies of the victims were pulled from rubble in the town of Hautmont, near France's border with Belgium. The last significant tornado to strike France was part of an outbreak in June 1967 that spawned twisters in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Monsoon Flood Disaster

Unusually heavy monsoon deluges have killed more than 100 people and caused widespread destruction across Pakistan. Most of the fatalities occurred in the North-West Frontier Province and adjoining tribal areas near the Afghan border, where flash floods swept away hundreds of mud homes. About 82,000 people were displaced by flooding in the eastern province of Punjab.

Tropical Cyclones

Some Olympic equestrian venues sustained light damage when Tropical Storm Kammuri moved ashore to the southwest of Hong Kong. The third such storm of the season in South China brought heavy rain to Guangdong province before dissipating over the high terrain of far northern Vietnam.

■ Tropical Storm Edouard caused light damage and flooding as it moved ashore from the Gulf of Mexico near the Texas-Louisiana border.

111-Year-Old Dad

A venerable New Zealand reptile that has outlived nearly every human who was also born in 1897 finally became a father at the ripe old age of 111. Henry the tuatara is a member of a species considered to be "living fossils" because they are thought to be the last descendants of a creature that roamed the Earth during the age of the dinosaurs 225 million years ago. He had shown no interest in the opposite sex during most of the 40 years he has lived in captivity at the Southland Museum, and was kept in isolation due to his aggressive behavior. But all that changed after a cancerous tumor was removed from his bottom. He has since been enjoying the company of three females, and mated with Mildred, a younger tuatara in her 70s, who produced 12 eggs in July. The museum had tried to mate Henry with Mildred 25 years ago, but he instead bit her tail off ... twice.

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www.earthweek.com
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OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Urine bottles: Another result of high fuel prices?

ONTARIO, Ore. (AP)—Police say there's been an alarming rise in urine-filled plastic containers found along a three-mile stretch of Interstate 84 in eastern Oregon. A litter crew for the Oregon Department of Transportation picked up an estimated 200-300 urine filled plastic bottles, along the highway, about half of which were found in a short stretch dubbed "Three Mile Hill." Police say that drivers—particularly commercial trucks—are typically driving very slowly through the area. Police think the price of fuel may be causing drivers to travel slower than normal to save fuel while at the same time passing rest areas or truck stops.

Cops follow Cheetos trail to nail burglar suspects

ST. PAUL (AP)—St. Paul police followed a trail of Cheetos in order to nab three teenagers suspected of burglarizing a vending machine. Officers were called to the Arlington Recreation Center on July 29, where they found a vending machine's glass had been broken with a chair. Most of the candy and chips were missing, according to a criminal complaint in Ramsey County District Court. The officers followed the orange, dusty trail from the rec center, around the side of the building and to a nearby home. Inside, they found numerous vending-sized bags of Cheetos and other snacks. Police arrested three males aged 17, 18 and 19 who soon arrived at the home by car.

Grandma arrested for driving with child on roof

MARATHON, Fla. (AP)—Authorities say a grandmother was arrested for driving around the parking lot of a Marathon grocery store with her 3-year-old child sitting on the roof of the car. Monroe County Sheriff's Office deputies were called to the Publix store Tuesday and arrested a 54-year-old woman after she was driving around with her three-year-old granddaughter on the roof of her car. The grandmother was released from jail 15 hours later. The woman said she was driving at "snail-speed" and holding the child's leg. Authorities say the woman told police she was giving the child some air and letting her have fun. She faces charges of child abuse. The child is back with her mother.

Good Housekeeping

Welcome the breeze, not the bugs

By LOIS M. BARON
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Even in hot summers, there are days that make us want to open ourselves up to the world—the air laden with scents and murmurs that remind us we are connected. And fall follows, of course, with air worth every crisp, low-humidity lungful.

To enjoy such weather without the distraction of bugs indoors, humans created screens. Then they upgraded. Today, screens can block ultraviolet rays, keep pets in, serve as security doors and enhance curb appeal.

The world of screen doors has definitely moved on from the flimsy aluminum one that stuck while Grandma was yelling about the flies getting in. If you're shopping for one today, you need to consider these questions:

- Do you have pets that might bump against the screen door?
- How much security do you want?
- What style is your house? Victorian? Modern? Rustic?
- Will the door serve as a storm door during the winter?
- Does your homeowners association have rules about screen doors?

Prepare to choose among door colors, material, construction, screen colors, security measures, energy considerations and hardware. Standard sizes are 30, 32, 34 and 36 inches wide. Screen doors are available for almost every type of door, including single doors, double French doors and sliding glass doors. Many have the option of replacing the screen panels with tempered glass or Plexiglas to become storm doors in the winter. (In the Southwest, people install insulated glass panes during the summer to cut down on heat entering the house and use screens during the mild winter.)

The mesh for screen doors can be chosen for function and visual appeal. "Pet mesh" is about seven times stronger than average insect mesh. Mesh with tiny holes deters tiny insects, such as "no-see-'ems"; punched steel deters would-be thieves.

Standard insect mesh is fiberglass. Mesh can be also be made of copper (extremely durable), aluminum and vinyl-coated polyester. Colors vary by manufacturer and include black, charcoal, white, bronze and green.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Laser-cut screen doors can be made in a variety of styles, such as this humming bird design.

BEFORE YOU BUY

(c) 2008, The Washington Post

Here are some online sources of screen door information, mostly Web sites of manufacturers or retailers:

GENERAL INFORMATION
- www.screendoors.com
- www.hometips.com/storm-and-screen-door.html

WOODEN DOORS
- Style: www.touchstonewoodworks.com/selectscreen-doorstyle.htm
- Finish: www.touchstonewoodworks.com/screen-doorfinish.htm

LASER-CUT SCREEN DOORS
- Unique Home Designs: www.uniquehd.com
- Titan Security: www.titansecurity.com/laserdoors.html

RETRACTABLE SCREENS
- www.dreamscreens.com

TEMPORARY SCREEN DOORS
- www.bugoffscreen.com

SCREEN MESH
- www.metroscreenworks.com

Bevi Chagnon learned about screen doors and pets last summer, after overhauling the screened porch at her family's 80-plus-year-old Connecticut beach house.

The finishing touch was putting on the new screen door. She had searched high and low to find a wooden door she could afford that fit the cottage's design and was constructed with dowels or screws, because staples wouldn't survive the nonstop traffic of family members and tenants all summer long, plus nor'easters.

"As my contractor and I stood back and admired it," she related in an e-mail, "a Harley-Davidson motorcycle screamed down the road and backfired, scaring the beejesums out of my 1-year-old Shetland Sheepdog puppy, who bolted at full-Sheltie-speed right through the door screening, down the stairs, across the beach and into the water for safety."

Total lifetime of the new screen door before destruction: less than 30 seconds. The dog was fine. The door now has some nice wood lattice on the bottom section.

> The world of screen doors has definitely moved on from the flimsy aluminum one that stuck while Grandma was yelling about the flies getting in.

Chagnon's screen door started with regular mesh on the bottom half. No one had mentioned the option of pet screen—although even that stronger mesh would not have held up against a panicked sheepdog.

How effective the pet screen is depends on the pet. Vicki Dobbin of suburban Washington took her cat-scratched screen door to a local mom-and-pop hardware store, which put in pet-proof screen.

"No one told our cat that it was pet-proof, however," she said, "and we're probably going to have to get it repaired again soon" because there has been more scratching. "But repair was so much cheaper than new, we don't mind."

Steel screen doors, while strong, chip and then rust, which looks ugly and weakens the door. Aluminum alloys can be stronger than steel and don't rust. A vinyl door with a steel frame inside requires no painting and won't chip or rust. Wooden doors don't rust but need to be painted or coated. It's another decision in which you need to balance cost, look and maintenance requirements.

The doors are available in dozens of colors, depending on the manufacturer. And designs go way beyond the basic two plain rectangles of screen. Arts and Crafts, Victorian, and other period doors are readily available. Or you can personalize. On a rustic house, a wooden door might show off a carved forest of pines and parading ducks. A modern house could have a white sunburst.

"We have over 200 standard designs," says Melissa Lawrence, marketing manager for Unique Home Designs. The Arizona company produces laser-cut screen doors and in July rolled out its product in mid-Atlantic Home Depot stores. "Now that people are staying in their homes longer, they are demanding a better product."

You don't have to have iron bars to have a secure screen door, Lawrence said. Stronger construction and materials, deadbolts, three-point locksets (which latch into the door frame at three places), and screens that can be replaced with double-paned thermal glass make it possible for the screen door to serve as the only front door.

In addition to regular hinged screen doors, a retractable screen door is also an option. A retractable screen may satisfy community association rules against a permanent screen on a front door. These screens operate as a roller blind does—only instead of hanging at the top of a frame and being pulled down to a bottom sill, the screen is pulled from a hidden roller at one side of the door and kept in place on the other side by a magnet or latches.

Lorraine Maslow, of Delaware, loves the retractable screen at the top of her storm door. As she described it in an e-mail: "The convenience with the rolling screen is fantastic beyond description. No more putting glass in and out. No more cleaning a dirty, dusty piece of glass that's been sitting in the garage all winter. On nice days in the winter or fall, the screen is available at a touch. When that smoke alarm goes off because dinner burned, the door stays closed but the screen may be opened for ventilation. Its convenience is such that I will never do without it."

A temporary screen door hung from a tension rod is on the market, too.

One of the most important things about a long-lasting screen door isn't the door itself but the frame. Michael Costello, owner of Mr. Handyman in suburban Washington, said that, especially on many newer houses, the front door has such a shallow frame that an additional frame must be built to support a screen door. The door must fit properly inside the frame to open and close smoothly. Also, the frame must be maintained so that the wood doesn't rot and fail to support the hinges. Costello said installation is likely to cost almost as much as the screen door itself.

KITCHEN MAGIC

Shrimp and Scallop Kabobs

Shrimp and Scallop Kabobs

One word of advice: Don't soak the shellfish in the soy and rice vinegar mixture. The vinegar will firm and "cook" the flesh.

1 pound large shrimp, shelled and deveined, leaving tail part of shell on, if you like
12 ounces large sea scallops
3 tablespoons soy sauce
3 tablespoons seasoned rice vinegar
1 tablespoon Asian sesame oil
2 tablespoons grated, peeled fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic, crushed with garlic press
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1 bunch green onions, cut on diagonal into 3-inch pieces
12 cherry tomatoes
6 long metal skewers

1. Prepare grill. Pull off and discard tough crescent-shaped muscle from each scallop. Pat shrimp and scallops dry with paper towels.

2. In large bowl, combine soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, ginger, garlic and brown sugar. Add shrimp and scallops, tossing to coat.

3. Alternately thread shrimp, scallops, green-onion pieces and cherry tomatoes onto skewers. Grill over medium heat, turning skewers occasionally and brushing shrimp and scallops with any remaining soy-sauce mixture during first half of cooking, until shrimp and scallops are just opaque throughout, 6 to 8 minutes. Serves 6.

GRILLING TIP: KABOBS

Foods that are cooked together on the same skewer should heat quickly and take the same amount of time to cook. Foods with different cooking times, like vegetables and meat, should be grilled on separate skewers. Also, be sure to leave a little space between pieces on the skewer so the food cooks evenly.

If you like metal skewers, buy twisted or square ones, not round—the food will twirl on the skewers less and cook more evenly. If you're using wooden or bamboo skewers, shape isn't a factor. But soak them in water for at least 15 minutes before using so they don't burn. Just pat dry before putting food on them.

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READY, SET, DECLUTTER

What to do about infant equipment?

Take baby steps

By LIZ SEYMOUR
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

Fifth of a nine-part series

WASHINGTON—This week, I feel good. After another session of reclaiming my attic from years of clutter, I walked down the stairs, shut the door and gave myself a hard-earned pat on the back for making real progress.

Nearly halfway through our 11-week project, professional organizer Caitlin Shear and I attacked the mounds of baby equipment, toys and bags of baby clothes that have been accumulating up there for five years. My two children are no longer babies, and I've been looking forward to the day I could get rid of all this stuff.

Much of what my husband and I stashed up there is still in good, "lightly used" condition, and Caitlin suggested places where it would be appreciated. Among the things we're passing on: the Peg Perego high chair that had too many crevices to keep clean; the Pack-and-Play portable crib that my 2-year-old son, Charlie, hasn't fit into in six months; the nearly new Baby Bjorn carrier that neither Charlie nor his big sister, Margaret, ever liked; the ExerSaucer toy that they both loved; the extra toddler gate we never needed; and dozens and dozens of stuffed animals. I was delighted to see the stuff go and to think it would help another family. Most of it has been donated to a local women's shelter.

What to do with baby equipment, toys and bags of baby clothes that have been accumulating over the years? Take baby steps.

I did keep the pink-striped Moses basket we received as a gift when Margaret was born more than five years ago. I'm hoping to pass it on to one of my friends or relatives. Actually, that's a total lie. It's the nicest present we received, and I don't want to give it to anyone. I want to keep it. Caitlin allowed it because I kept almost nothing else.

Clothes, I discovered, were much more difficult to part with than baby equipment. Every sundress revived some sweet memory; every bathing suit was a reminder of their early days at the beach. But even though I've been pretty good about weeding out outgrown clothes, faithfully sorting through and donating wearable things to AmVets every Dec. 31, there were still bags and bags of children's clothes all over the attic.

Finally I got ruthless. How many Old Navy T-shirts do I really need to save? Almost all of Charlie's 18-months wardrobe was packed up and donated. Maggie's size-5 clothes from last summer were delivered the next day to one of her preschool teachers, who knows Maggie's outfits better than anyone and had been eyeing a few things for her own daughter.

I didn't get rid of everything. During the past few years, any kids clothes I really couldn't bear to part with I would throw into one large plastic container, to be decided on at a later date. That box still has room for a few more memories, and I feel comfortable that I haven't gotten rid of every onesie.

I'm also keeping the bumper and other linens from Maggie's crib in hopes of one day converting it all into pillows of various sizes. And I've set up two plastic storage drawers, one for each child, for filing mementos from their earliest years, including their hospital I.D. bracelets, baptism certificates, cards they received from relatives and friends, and a lock of hair from their first cut. I totally fell down when it came to recording important milestones (first tooth, first steps) in the baby books. (Does Charlie even have a baby book?) I hope to be a bit better about these file drawers.

In the end, Caitlin and I packed up 31 items of baby clothing, a dozen cloth diapers, a changing mat, baby Halloween costumes and the 30-plus stuffed animals and sent them off to a humane society that will resell the items in their thrift stores.

■ ■ ■ ■

A note about the attic: It's gotten very hot up there. Even though Caitlin and I spend no more than two hours at a time decluttering and are drinking plenty of water throughout our weekly sessions, it has been tough to get as much done as we want. In a perfect scenario, I would not be doing this project during a record-breaking heat wave in Washington. So if, like me, you have an attic that's in complete chaos, consider waiting for cooler temperatures to arrive before getting started. The kind of clutter I'm dealing with can be found in any room of the house, so you can adapt Caitlin's strategy of organizing by topic.

Misaligned bolt keeps door from locking

By SAMANTHA MAZZOTTA
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: I have been unable to fully lock my front door for a while now because the door bolt will no longer go all the way into the frame. I think the door is misaligned. How do I fix this?—Gerard J., San Diego

A: Definitely check the alignment of the door. You can do this by holding the end of a ruler or other straight item against the top of the frame to see if the crack between the top of the door and the frame is straight or has a slight angle. You also can check the sides and bottom this way. If the door is not hanging straight, work with a friend to remove the door from its hinges and place shims under the hinges.

A shim can be as simple as a thin piece of cardboard cut to the shape of the hinge. When slid into place behind the hinge plate, it raises the profile of the hinge, which changes the angle at which the door is hung. You may need to re-hang the door a few times to get the proper width and placement of the shims.

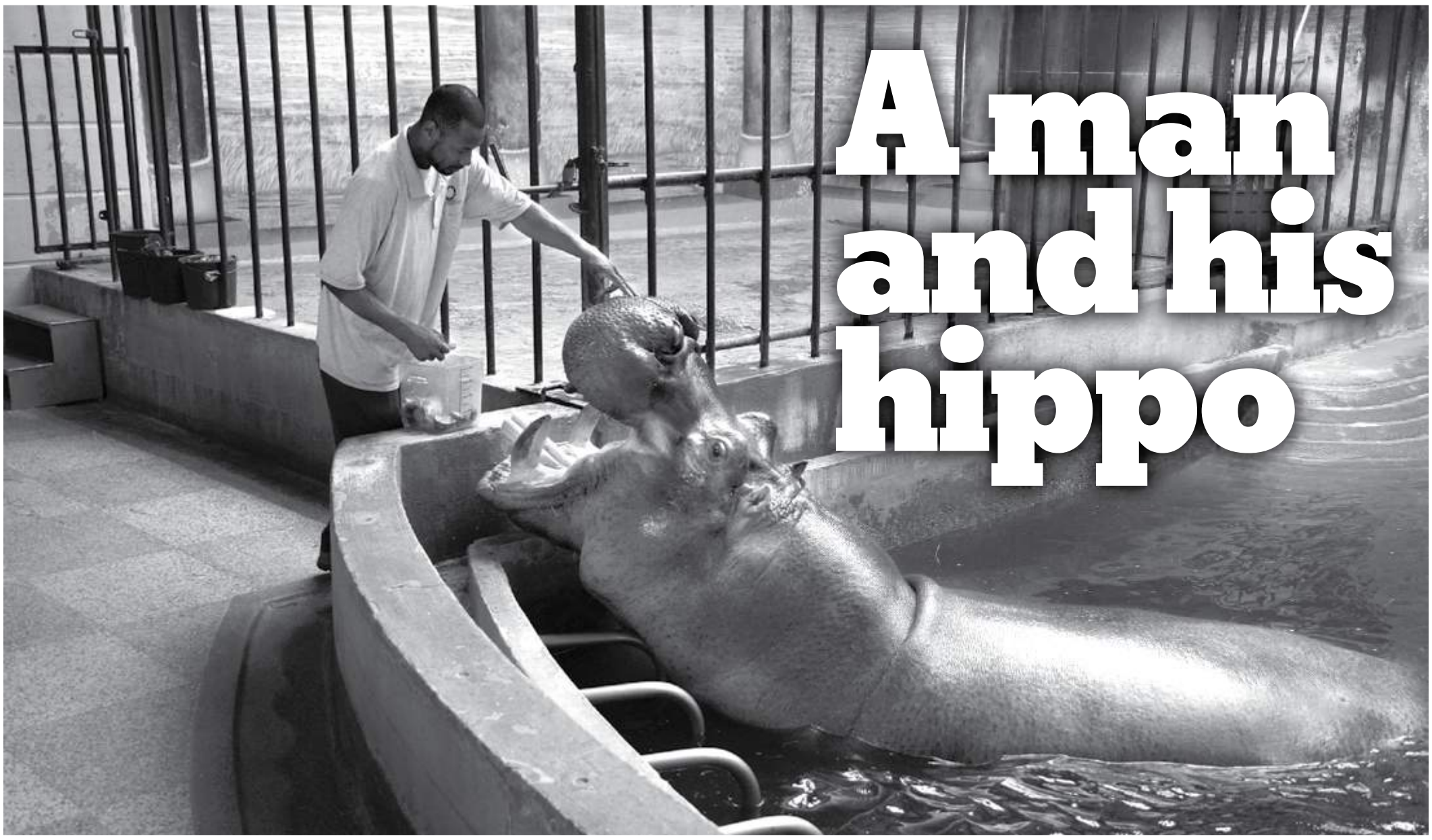
If the door is straight or shimming doesn't resolve the latch issue, check the alignment of the bolt with its strike plate (the metal plate set in the door frame). Make sure the plate is screwed tightly to the frame and not wiggling loosely.

The latchbolt itself can be raised or lowered slightly by shimming it in much the same way the door is shimmed. You can insert a thin piece of cardboard behind the bottom hinge to raise the latchbolt, or behind the top hinge to lower the latchbolt.

HOME TIP: Removing and replacing door hinges can gradually widen screw holes until the screws no longer tighten. Renew the screw holes by gluing wooden golf tees into the holes and cutting them flush with the surface.

Send questions or home-repair tips to homeguru2000@hotmail.com, or write This Is a Hammer, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

The Good Life



A man and his hippo

THE WASHINGTON POST

Zookeeper John Taylor can tell if Happy the hippo is in the mood for having his teeth trimmed by looking into his eyes.

By MICHAEL E. RUANE
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—The stuff we do for love.

Take JT and Happy.

Happy is not much to look at. He has stained teeth, tiny ears and he drools. He's very large—like, slow-getting-out-of-the-pool large. And he'll sneeze on you if you're not paying attention to him. He gets away with this because he's the National Zoo's only Nile hippopotamus.

JT, on the other hand—short for John Taylor, a keeper at the zoo—sets aside the best hay for Happy, hoses down Happy's tongue in the morning, lobs heads of lettuce into Happy's yawning mouth, and can look into Happy's bulbous brown eyes and tell if he's upset.

Thirteen years they've been together.

But soon they will have to part, and JT, at least, is heartbroken. "Miss him ain't the word," he said. "I hate talking about it because I get too emotional."

The zoo is seeking a new home for Happy because the coming renovation of the zoo's elephant house, where Happy has lived his whole life, will claim his quarters.

"The hippo space we currently have is going to become elephant space," said National Zoo Senior Curator Brandie Smith. Though there is a "teeny, tiny" chance he could stay, Smith said, current plans do not include Happy.

"We need to find a new space for Happy," she said. "We want to make sure he goes to a place that's well qualified to care for him.

"The National Zoo is very strongly committed to (Asian) elephant programs," Smith said, in part because the animals are endangered in the wild. "With zoos you only have so much space available. ... We don't have a strong hippopotamus program right now."

Happy has a little over a year before he has to move, a zoo spokeswoman said. The zoo has borrowed the giant crate in which he would be shipped, and keepers will soon start training him to enter it. A crane will probably be required to lift him, the zoo said.

But it's not easy finding a home for a 7,000-pound adult male Nile hippo. Happy, who was born at the zoo 27 years ago, needs lots of clean water, for an array of reasons that include his indoor and outdoor pools, where he spends much of his time submerged.

He also needs his own room, so to speak. Male hippos are extremely territorial, and will attack other hippos, or people, that intrude in their space. "Happy doesn't want friends," Smith said, and "hippo space is expensive."

All of this dismays JT, a tall man with long strides and two earrings, who says he had hoped to retire as "the hippo man."

"You get attached to these animals," he said.

JT, who declined to give his age, has been taking care of Happy since 1995.

The keeper was working as a parking and ticket manager with Friends of the National Zoo, which runs the parking lots and food courts, and volunteered to work for a month with the elephants and rhinos, he said. From there he landed a six-month gig in the elephant house, and that became full-time.

Like Happy, JT is local. He grew up and still lives in a neighborhood near the zoo. As a kid he would roam the zoo grounds, never dreaming that one day he would work there caring for one of the world's largest animals.

Although JT also cares for the zoo's pygmy hippos, capybaras, peccaries and Przewalski's horses, Happy is his favorite.

Hippo stats pour out of him: how fast they run on land (25 mph); how fast they run in the water (10 mph); how much they eat (55 pounds of hay, grain and produce a day); how long they live (about 45 years in the wild, longer in captivity); how much time they spend in the water (18 to 22 hours per day); how their brains are smaller than a giraffe's; and how, if they're mad, they can "break you in half like a pencil."

Generally, they get mad at trespassers entering their territory, attacking out of pure irritation, not for food. Hippos are vegetarians.

Their sweat is tinted red, and works as a sunscreen and a disinfectant. They have nasty-looking canine and incisor teeth up front and two long rows or molars in the back. They have stubbly whiskers, tongues the size of shovels and remarkably delicate-looking feet.

At the same time, JT said, Happy is still a potentially dangerous animal. "You're talking about 7,000 pounds," he said, roughly the weight of a Hummer. "Even if he bumped you, you're dead."

"We're looking at an animal that happens to be one of the most dangerous animals in Africa," he said. Hippos, capable of mauling, crushing or drowning the unwary, "kill more people in Africa a year than any other animal except mosquitoes."

And JT is not really sure that Happy knows him.

"I think he knows my voice," the keeper said. "I think he knows my smell, or when I come around. I think so. I'm one of the keepers that's scared to say, 'Yeah, yeah, the animal knows me,' then tomorrow get killed if I misjudge."

But there is a bond. "I do love this guy, don't get me wrong," he said.

For his part, Happy will let JT cut his teeth, a dicey procedure that has to be done in captivity, where hippos' teeth can grow eight to 12 inches long from the lack of the combat that they engage in over turf and females in the wild.

The job requires care. If Happy decides to close his huge mouth, JT must get his hand and the cutting blade out in time. The keeper usually checks Happy's eyes to see if the hippo's up for tooth-cutting that day. "His eyes tell you everything," the keeper said.

THE WASHINGTON POST

John Taylor has cared for Happy, the Nile hippo, for 13 years. But the zoo is seeking a new home for Happy because the coming renovation of the zoo's elephant house. "Miss him ain't the word," he said. "I hate talking about it because I get too emotional."

Bob Weber Jr.'s Slylock Fox and Comics for Kids

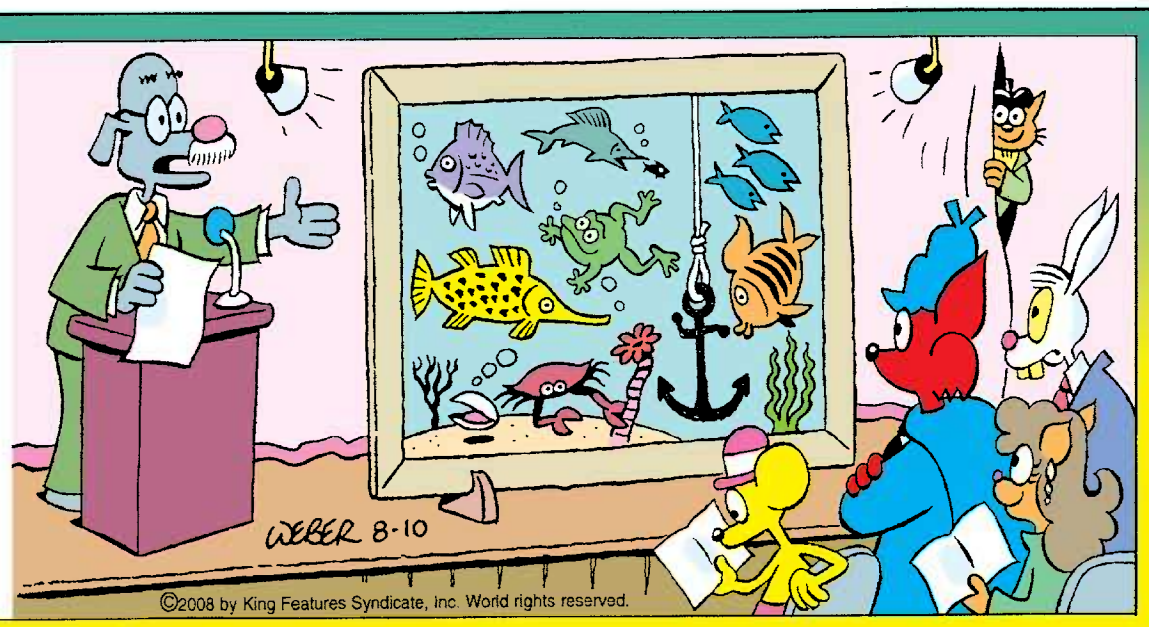
True or False

1) Crows are considered to be among the most intelligent birds in the world.
2) Crows never fly more than two miles in pursuit of food.
3) Crows are migratory and will assemble in large flocks in the fall to fly south.
4) Crows eat only corn and other grains.

Answer -- 1) True. 2) False. Crows may fly up to fifty miles in pursuit of food. 3) True. 4) False. Crows are omnivorous. They will eat anything edible.

Slylock Fox suspects the undersea painting being auctioned is a fake. He believes art forger Koppy Kat stole the valuable original and replaced it with a copy. The felonious feline always leaves a visual error in his forgeries. What error did Slylock observe?

Solution -- There is a frog in the painting. Frogs are freshwater creatures and do not inhabit the sea.



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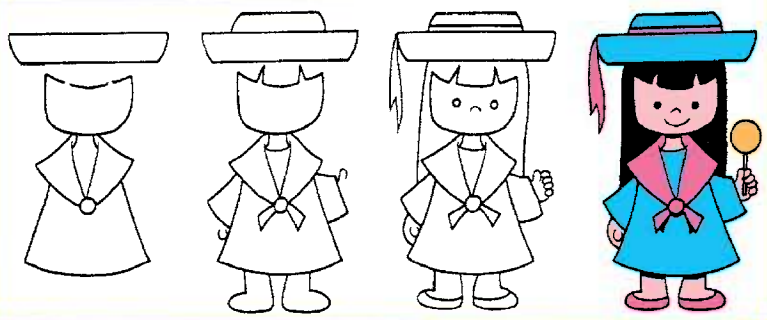
Find six differences between these panels.

www.kidcartoonists.com

Answer --Sock, chimney, stick, monkey's tail, ground and ear.

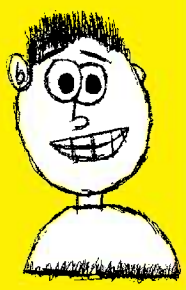
New! The fourth **Find the six differences** collection is here. Send $4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to **Six Differences No. 4,** P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

HOW TO DRAW a little girl



YOUR DRAWING

Today's terrific artist is Nicholas Causer, age 12, of Altoona, PA



Submit your drawings at **www.kidcartoonists.com**

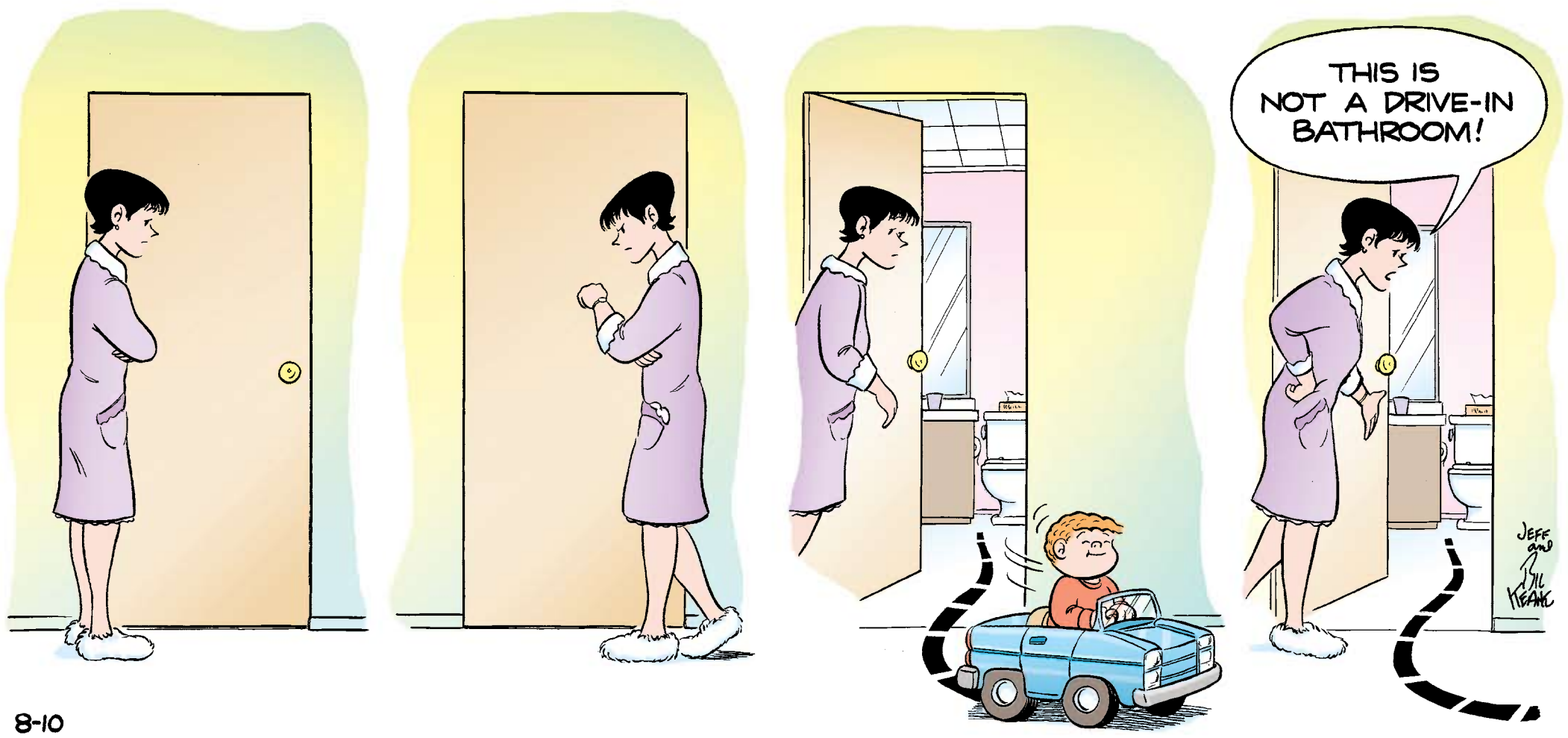
These scrambled last names are famous artists. How many can you unscramble?

1) DANERMRTB
2) SPOASIC
3) LCOOKPL
4) EFEO'EKF

Answer -- 1) Rembrandt 2) Picasso 3) Pollock 4) O'Keeffe

THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

By Bil Keane



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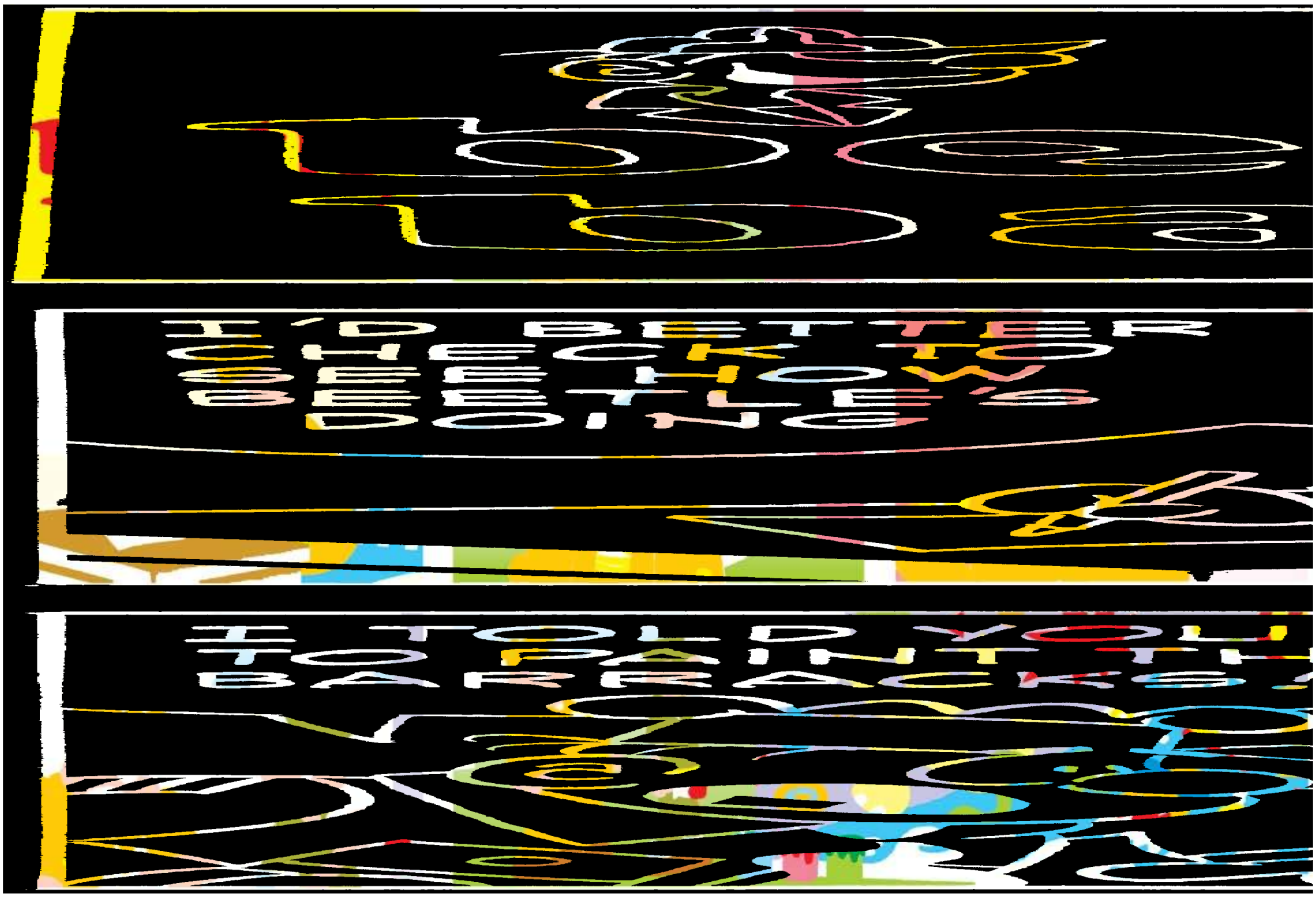

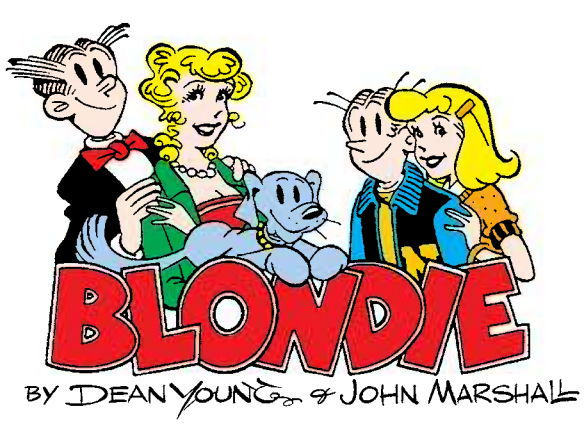

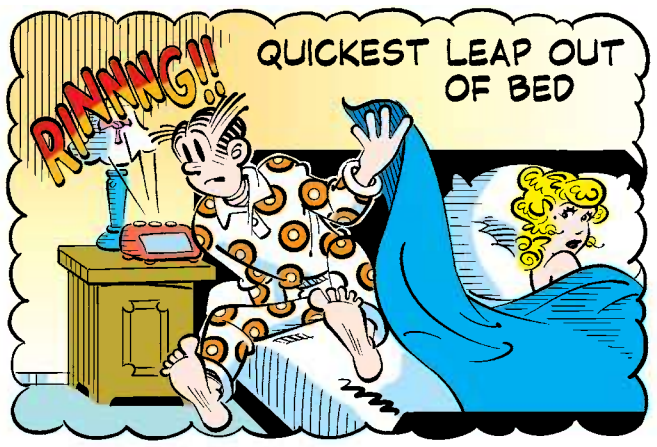

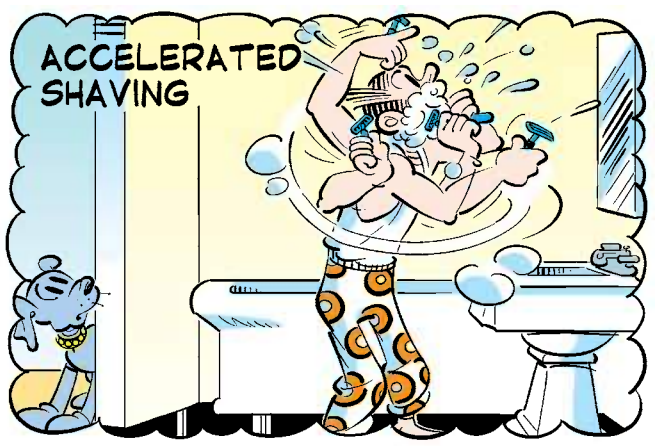

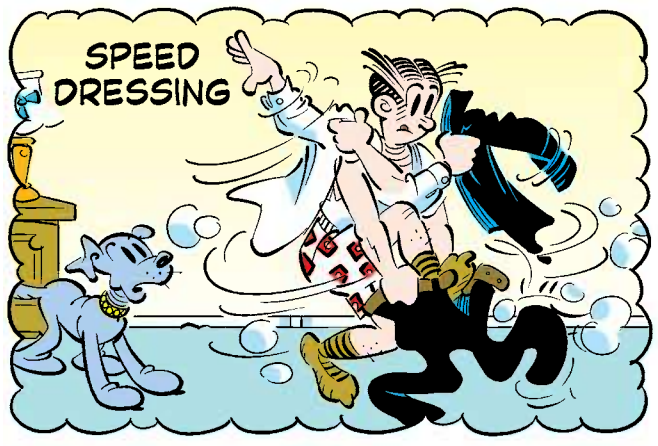

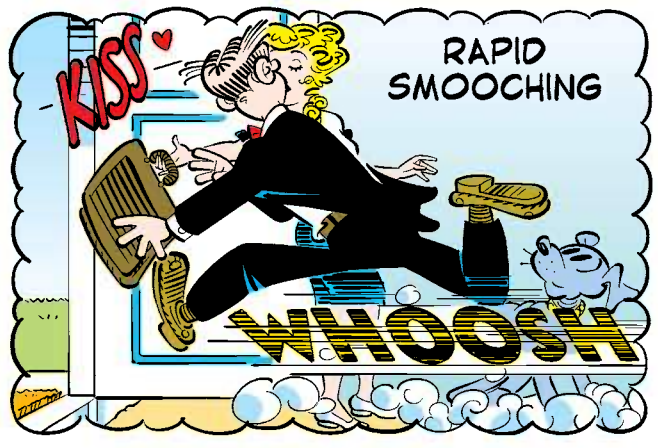

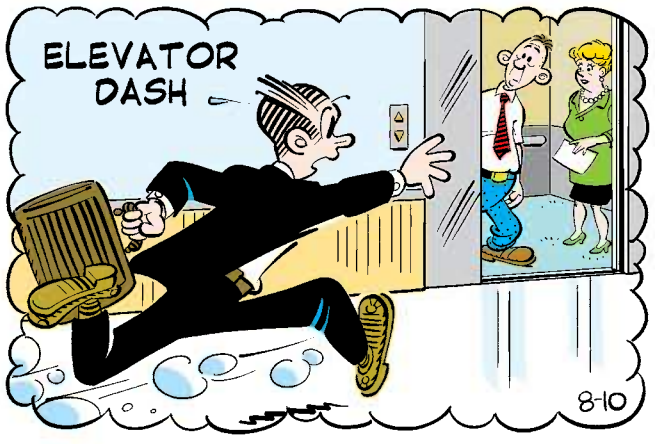

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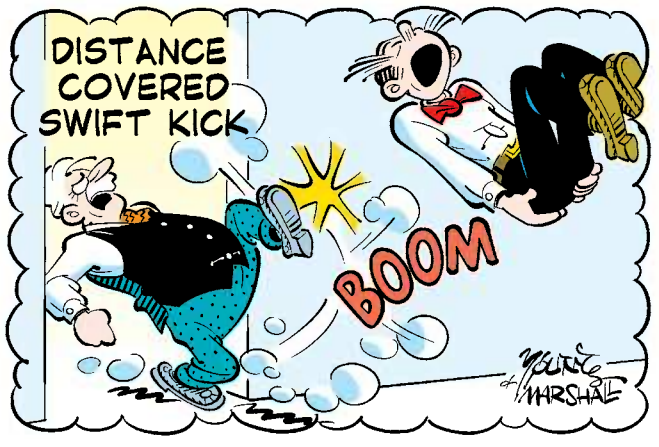
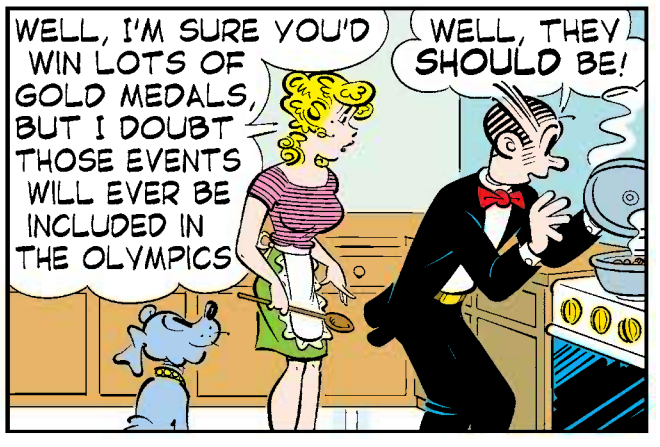
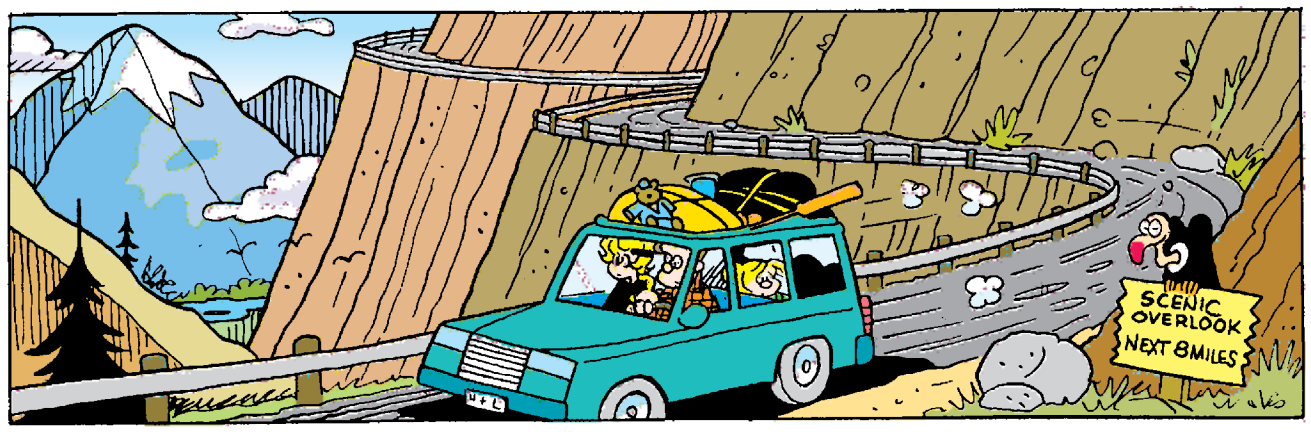
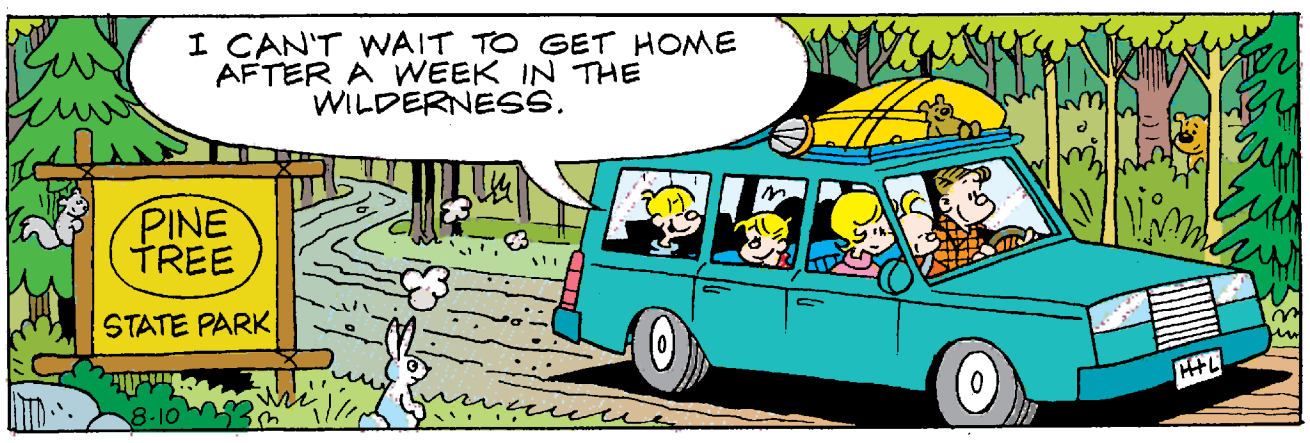



WELL, I'M SURE YOU'D WIN LOTS OF GOLD MEDALS, BUT I DOUBT THOSE EVENTS WILL EVER BE INCLUDED IN THE OLYMPICS
WELL, THEY SHOULD BE!

Hi and Lois

by BRIAN and GREG WALKER





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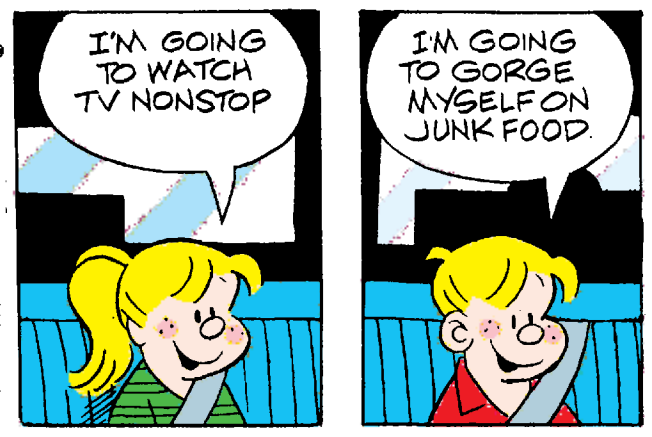
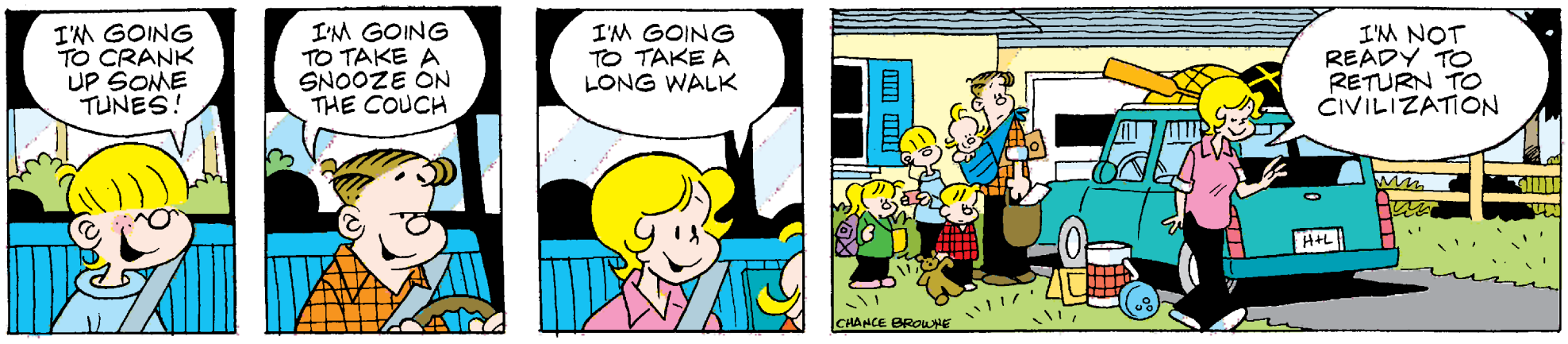
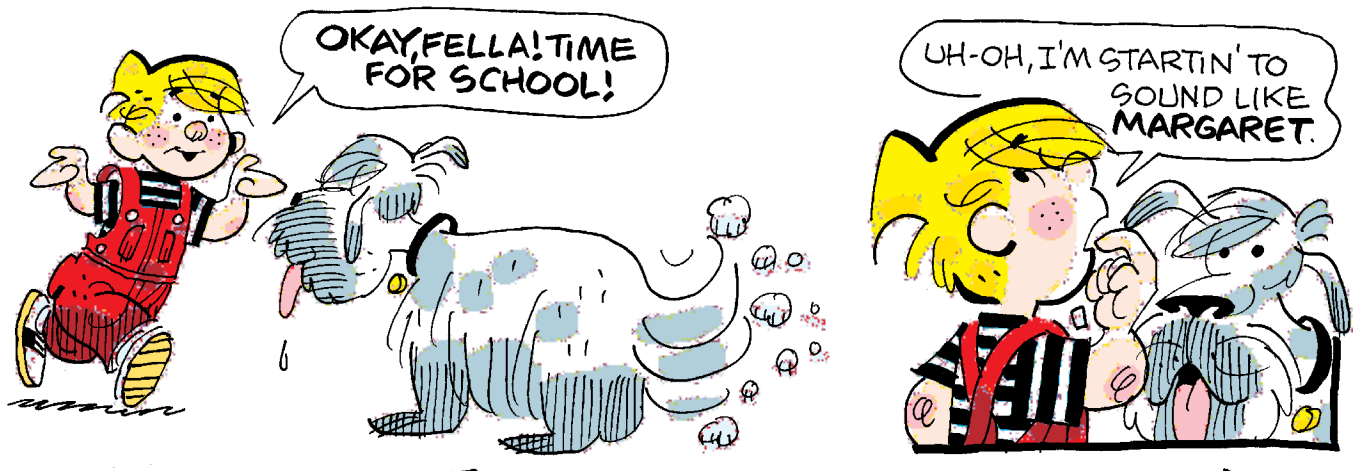
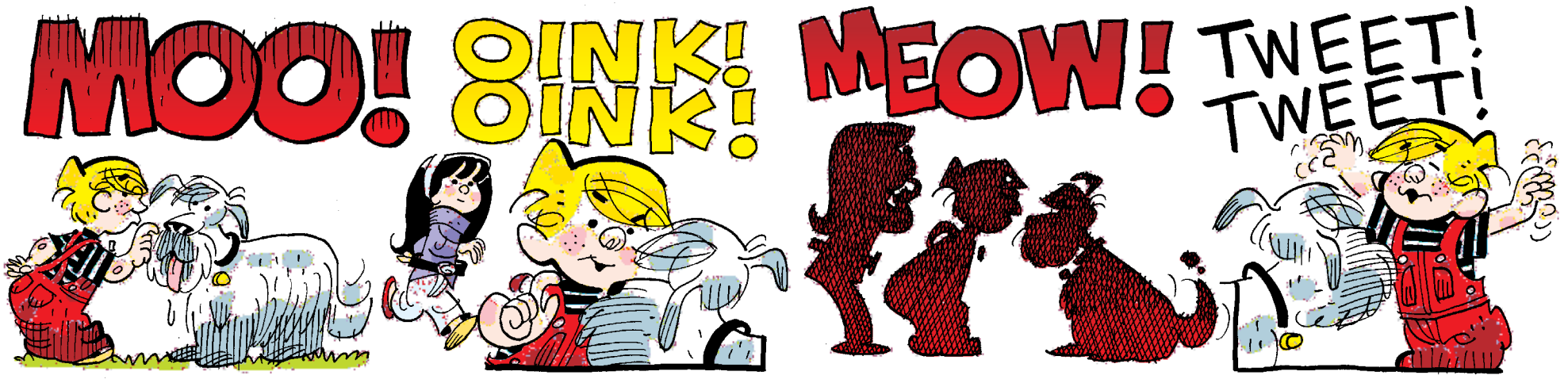


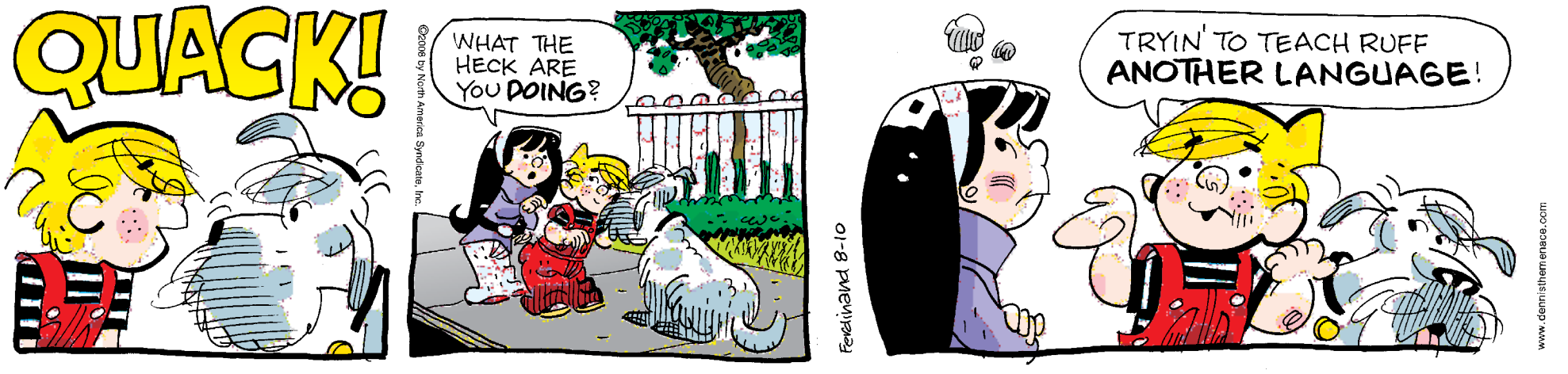

I'M GOING TO CRANK UP SOME TUNES!
I'M GOING TO TAKE A SNOOZE ON THE COUCH
I'M GOING TO TAKE A LONG WALK
I'M NOT READY TO RETURN TO CIVILIZATION
CHANCE BROWNE

Dennis the Menace

Unbarkable!







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United States

'Other woman' is 42-year-old filmmaker

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The woman former presidential candidate John Edwards admitted having an affair with Friday is a sometimes Hollywood producer-director who has all but dropped from sight since dismissing word of their liaison as nothing but lies last month.

Rielle Hunter, a 42-year-old who recently gave birth to a girl who Edwards says is not his, has long been said to be the inspiration for Alison Poole, the "cocaine-addled, sexually voracious" 20-year-old lead character in "My Life Story," Jay McInerney's novel of 1980s excess and degradation.

"She's a nice girl," the New York Post's Page Six gossip column quoted McInerney as saying earlier this week. The author's agent did not return a call Friday from The Associated Press.

Hunter, whose first name is pronounced Riley, used to be "a real party girl" but has calmed down in recent years, McInerney told the Post.

Hunter

She and her business partner, Mimi Hockman, created the company Midline Groove Productions in 2006 and produced four Web videos showing Edwards as a down-to-earth, regular guy visiting everyday people across the country. One of them shows him visiting Uganda.

Between giving speeches, Edwards relaxes and jokes with several people traveling with him, including a woman who is never seen on camera.

"That is a great speech," he tells her at one point as he reviews the words he will later deliver to an audience: "If we want to live in a moral, honest and just America ... we can't wait for somebody else to do it. We have to do it."

The woman giggles in response.

Midline Groove Productions is described on its Web site as "committed to projects that reveal truth."

Neither Hunter nor Hockman responded to an e-mail Friday seeking comment. A phone number for the company could not be obtained.

Microbiologist says she was stalked by Ivins

BALTIMORE (AP)—A microbiologist claims she was stalked for decades by Bruce Ivins, the suspect in the deadly anthrax mailings of 2001 who, according to court documents, was obsessed with the sorority she joined in college.

Nancy L. Haigwood and her former husband, Carl J. Scandella, also think Ivins may have wanted to get close to her when he moved in down the street from the couple in the suburbs of Washington in the early 1980s.

Ivins, an Army scientist, committed suicide last week as federal authorities prepared to charge him with killing five people by sending anthrax spores in the mail. The letters were dropped in a mailbox near a Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority office in Princeton, N.J., and prosecutors have suggested Ivins chose that location because of its proximity to the office.

In another development, the Justice Department sent a letter to the lawyer for Steven Hatfill, another military scientist who was a colleague of Ivins, formally exonerating Hatfill after saying earlier this week that Ivins was the only suspect. In 2002, law enforcement officials called Hatfill a "person of interest" in the investigation, a claim that brought a lawsuit from Hatfill the following year.

ACROSS THE NATION

Charges continue piling up against Detroit mayor

DETROIT (AP)—For anyone keeping score, the leader of the nation's 11th-largest city now faces 10 felony charges in two separate cases. Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick was charged Friday with assaulting two investigators who were trying to deliver a subpoena to the mayor's friend last month. The two felony counts carry a maximum penalty of two years in prison and a fine of $2,000. Kilpatrick spent Thursday night in jail after violating bond conditions in the other case against him. He is accused along with a former top aide of perjury and other charges over their testimony in a lawsuit. The city charter says a felony conviction evicts him from office.

Ga. woman gets new trial in death of boyfriend, 85

ATLANTA (AP)—An elderly woman convicted of killing her 85-year-old ex-boyfriend because she thought he was seeing another woman was granted a new trial Friday, more than two years after she was sentenced to life in prison. A jury convicted Lena Driskell of killing Herman Winslow in 2005 at the Atlanta assisted living home where they had both lived, but her new attorneys argued that her defense team was ineffective. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Ural Glanville agreed, saying Driskell's previous lawyers didn't object to key testimony and didn't press for a charge of manslaughter, which carries a lesser sentence.

Judge: NJ's ex-governor owes wife no alimony

TRENTON, N.J. (AP)—Former Gov. James E. McGreevey will not have to pay alimony to his ex-wife, a judge ruled Friday in granting the couple a divorce after a tumultuous eight-year marriage that crumbled publicly when McGreevey acknowledged he was a "gay American." A superior court judge ruled that McGreevey, the nation's first openly gay governor, must pay $250 a week, or $1,075 a month, in child support for his 6-year-old daughter with Dina Matos. Matos had asked for $2,500 a month alimony for four years and $1,750 a month in child support. The couple share custody of the girl.

Osteen's wife denies assaulting flight attendant

HOUSTON (AP)—The wife of megachurch evangelist Joel Osteen told jurors Friday she was "dumbfounded" and "shook up" after a flight attendant accused her of assaulting her over a spill on a first-class seat. Victoria Osteen, in court because the flight attendant is suing her, said she pushed no one and even ended up cleaning the spill that sparked the incident herself. Continental Airlines flight attendant Sharon Brown claims Victoria Osteen grabbed, elbowed and pushed her before the start of a 2005 flight to Vail, Colo. Victoria Osteen and her husband, who also had been on board and testified earlier Friday, denied that account. "I love people. I'm guilty of that," Victoria Osteen said.

Fire chopper moved slowly, hit tree before crash

REDDING, Calif. (AP)—Witnesses of a fiery helicopter accident that killed nine people told investigators the aircraft had lifted off more slowly than normal before it struck a tree and crashed in a remote Northern California forest, officials said Friday. After the chopper's nose hit the tree about 40 to 50 feet above ground, its rotor blades struck trees and branches before the aircraft plummeted to the ground Tuesday night, said National Transportation Safety Board member Kitty Higgins, citing accounts from 10 witnesses. The aircraft came to rest on its left side about 150 yards from its takeoff site and then "quickly filled with very dense, thick black smoke" before igniting in a fiery blaze.

Chicken crosses the road, then abandoned by thief

KENNEWICK, Wash. (AP)—Why did the chicken cross the road? In the case of Jerry Sleater's 5-foot, 400-pound bright blue rooster, that's apparently as far as whoever was trying to steal it could get it. When the 76-year-old Eastern Washington man went to get his newspaper Thursday morning, the big bird named Rudy was lying beside the road. Sleater has kept the metal rooster perched on his property south of Kennewick for two years and says, "Rudy is a family pet. He doesn't go anywhere, but he's part of the family." Sleater said he thinks that whoever was trying to steal Rudy got spooked after pushing the oversized rooster down a dirt embankment.

AP

A workman attaches cables to a passenger bus after the bus crashed through a guard rail on Highway 75, Friday, Aug. 8, 2008 in Sherman, Texas.

Crash of illegal charter bus in Texas kills 15

SHERMAN, Texas (AP)—An unlicensed charter bus carrying a Vietnamese-American Catholic group on a pilgrimage to a religious festival blew an illegally treaded tire and skidded off a highway early Friday, killing at least 15 people and injuring dozens, authorities said.

The bus, en route from Houston to Missouri with 55 people aboard, smashed into a guardrail and tipped over along the edge of the road at about 12:45 a.m., crushing one side of the vehicle and scattering luggage, clothes, a sandal and a blood-soaked pillow across the grass and pavement.

Ten people were taken to the hospital by helicopter, and some were in critical condition late Friday.

Passenger Leha Nguyen, 45, said passengers were dozing off when she heard a noise and screaming, and opened her eyes.

"Somebody was laying on my legs. A lady next to me, she had her arm crushed up. The lady who was on my left, a man was on top of her," she said at a hospital. She said nobody had been wearing seat belts, and people were strewn all over. A television had fallen on one person.

"I think I'm the luckiest one out of most people," she said.

Clinton says she wants Obama to win White House

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Hillary Rodham Clinton told an exuberant crowd Friday she wants Barack Obama to win the White House, even though he dashed her own presidential dreams - and she wants her supporters to vote that way, too.

Clinton

"Anyone who voted for me or caucused for me has so much more in common with Sen. Obama than Sen. McCain," Clinton told her cheering audience in the Las Vegas suburb of Henderson. "Remember who we were fighting for in my campaign."

Though she has endorsed her former rival, the speech was Clinton's first appearance at a rally for Obama since the two appeared together in Unity, N.H., in June.

In another sign of growing detente between the House of Clinton and the House of Obama, Democrats said Bill Clinton would speak on the third night of this month's national convention in Denver.

The Clintons' efforts on Obama's behalf may ease worries within the party that bad feelings from the long primary battle might erupt at the convention.

She said Friday that "we may have started on two separate paths, but we are on one journey now." She said her long primary campaign against the Illinois senator showed her "his passion, his determination, his grace and his grit."

The crowd let her know they still held her in high regard. They cheered Obama's name and waved his campaign signs, but no mention of him won as loud a roar as Clinton's introduction.

Asia

Security tightens more as Olympics get under way

YINING, China (AP)—Security forces squeezed their grip on China a notch tighter Friday for the start of the Olympics, edging up restrictions in the capital and imposing much tougher ones in a restive Muslim area in the country's far west.

The Beijing Games' glittering curtain raiser went off without any obvious signs of trouble, a day after an Islamic group seeking independence for Xinjiang province threatened to attack buses, trains and planes during the two-week competition.

In Beijing, authorities closed streets and iconic Tiananmen Square for most of the day as President Hu Jintao hosted dozens of world leaders at a luncheon in the adjacent Great Hall of the People. Motorcades later sped the dignitaries, including President Bush, to the main Olympic stadium for the evening ceremony.

The square reopened, and thousands flooded in to watch a fireworks show after the ceremony, hemmed into designated areas by armed police. Hundreds of celebrating Chinese who gathered outside the stadium, known as the Bird's Nest, were also ringed by police.

Normally bustling streets in the capital fell unusually quiet after city officials asked people to keep to organized sites with giant television screens or stay home to watch the ceremony.

A 100,000-strong contingent of police and special forces are safeguarding Olympics venues, while hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents have been formed into voluntary security patrols.

The mood was tenser on the other side of the country, near China's border with Pakistan and Afghanistan, where anti-terrorism police patrolled towns in Xinjiang province and authorities shut down a bustling bazaar in the region's main city for security reasons.

Xinjiang, home to the Muslim Uighur minority that has long had difficult relations with the central government, has been on edge since a brazen attack Monday by two men who used a truck, bombs and knives to kill 16 border policemen and wounded another 16.

On Thursday, a videotape purportedly made by the Turkistan Islamic Party, a militant group seeking independence for Xinjiang, was released with threats of attacks during the Olympics. The group is believed to be based across the border in Pakistan, where security experts say core members have received training from al-Qaida.

Here in Yining, the site of a major protest in 1997 by Uigars demanding Xinjiang independence, streets were eerily empty and most shops were closed during the opening ceremony.

Politics, pageantry blend for Bush at Olympics

BEIJING (AP)—President Bush reveled in the spectacular opening moments of the Olympics on Friday, but a burgeoning crisis stole some of his attention as Russia and Georgia neared the brink of all-out war.

Bush got regular updates on the crisis and spoke about it with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as the two happened to be together for an Olympic luncheon of world leaders.

"We will continue to be engaged," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said in Beijing as the United States called for an immediate cease-fire and sent an envoy to the region.

The president's open agenda on Saturday reflects his intention to soak in the Olympics and enjoy some family time.

Beijing couples rush to tie knot on lucky 08-08-08

BEIJING (AP)—For over a year, Zhao Gang and Liu Rui had hoped to get married at 8:08 a.m. on China's auspicious triple-eight date Friday. Problem was, so did more than 16,000 other Beijing couples.

The couple ended up having to settle for a slot later in the day, but that didn't diminish their joy.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Zhao, 30, after he and his bride received their marriage certificate at the Chaoyang District registry office in eastern Beijing.

The couple, who wore simple silver wedding bands, handed out red boxes of candy to well-wishers and office workers. A photographer snapped away as the couple posed, proudly holding up their certificates on which "8-8-08" was printed.

The number eight has long been considered fortuitous in China, and after Beijing organizers chose Aug. 8 as the day for the Olympics to begin, many couples found an extra reason to get married Friday.

Beijing residents told to stay home as games open

BEIJING (AP)—Giant screens were set up in parks so Beijing residents could share in the glory of their city hosting the lavish Olympics opening ceremony Friday. But in at least one park, security guards shut the gates and shooed people away.

Main roads were quiet, with police cars stationed at every intersection. In old Beijing neighborhoods, security volunteers in Olympic T-shirts sat on street corners or cycled around looking for any hint of trouble.

After seven years of buildup and billions of dollars in preparations, the capital declared Friday an unofficial holiday and encouraged millions of residents to stay home or use public transport. Officials said it was an effort to reduce traffic congestion as 91,000 people attended the opening of the Beijing games.

AP

U.S. President George Bush practices with U.S. beach volleyball player Misty MayTreanor at the Chaoyang Park Beach Volleyball Ground at the Beijing 2008 Olympics in Beijing, Saturday, Aug. 9, 2008.

World

AP

A column of Russian armored vehicles, headed towards the breakaway republic of South Ossetia's capital Tskhinvali, is seen in North Ossetia, Russia, Friday, Aug. 8, 2008.

Georgia reports new air attacks at military bases

DZHAVA, Georgia (AP)—Russia dispatched an armored column into the breakaway enclave of South Ossetia on Friday after Georgia, a staunch U.S. ally, launched a surprise offensive to crush separatists. Witnesses said hundreds of civilians were killed. Fighting reportedly raged well into the night with Georgia's interior ministry saying early Saturday that warplanes attacked three Georgian military bases and key facilities for shipping oil to the West.

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WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States urged Russia on Friday to halt aircraft and missile attacks in Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia and withdraw its combat forces from Georgian territory as the situation in the former Soviet state verged on full-scale war.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called the parties involved in hopes of ending the fighting, and made plans to send a U.S. envoy to the region.

"The United States calls for an immediate cease-fire to the armed conflict in Georgia's region of South Ossetia," Rice said in a statement. "We call on Russia to cease attacks on Georgia by aircraft and missiles, respect Georgia's territorial integrity and withdraw its ground combat forces from Georgian soil."

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The fighting, which devastated the capital of Tskhinvali, threatened to ignite a wider war between Georgia and Russia, and escalate tensions between Moscow and Washington. Georgia said it was forced to launch the assault because of rebel attacks; the separatists alleged Georgia violated a cease-fire.

"I saw bodies lying on the streets, around ruined buildings, in cars," said Lyudmila Ostayeva, 50, who had fled with her family to Dzhava, a village near the border with Russia. "It's impossible to count them now. There is hardly a single building left undamaged."

WORLD BRIEFS

Rabies from bats suspected in Venezuela deaths

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—At least 38 Warao Indians have died in remote villages in Venezuela, and medical experts suspect an outbreak of rabies spread by bites from vampire bats. Laboratory investigations have yet to confirm the cause, but the symptoms point to rabies, according to two researchers from the University of California at Berkeley and other medical experts. The two UC Berkeley researchers - the husband-and-wife team of anthropologist Charles Briggs and public health specialist Dr. Clara Mantini-Briggs - said the symptoms include fever, body pains, tingling in the feet followed by progressive paralysis, and an extreme fear of water. Victims tend to have convulsions and grow rigid before death.

Baghdad zoo welcomes pair of US-donated tiger cubs

BAGHDAD (AP)—The Baghdad Zoo on Friday welcomed a pair of rare Bengal tiger cubs that were donated by a North Carolina animal sanctuary despite protests by animal rights activists. The tigers—a male and a female named Riley and Hope—frolicked with red and blue balls in a wading pool and playfully wrestled with each other in their cage, while U.S. soldiers and journalists snapped pictures and delighted Iraqis strolled by. The animals, which were donated by the North Carolina-based Conservators' Center, arrived Monday after being flown to Baghdad from the United States in a $66,000 trip funded by the U.S. Embassy and transported to the zoo by the U.S. military.

Police: Top Nigerian development official arrested

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP)—Police on Friday arrested the head of a federal agency charged with developing Nigeria's impoverished southern oil region after allegations the man spent millions of dollars on a witch doctor in hopes vanquishing a rival. President Umaru Yar'Adua announced Friday that the head of the Niger Delta Development Corporation, Sam Edem, had been suspended from his job after local media reports of Edem's large expenditure on black magic. Police later said he had been arrested. The police said they were investigating the source of the roughly $4 million Edem reportedly spent on hiring a sorcerer to hex and kill another development official.

Shiite militia to become religious, cultural body

BAGHDAD (AP)—Anti-U.S. Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr ordered most of his militiamen Friday to lay down their arms, and his spokesman said the young cleric might call off all resistance if the Americans accept a timetable to leave Iraq. In the north, a car bomb exploded Friday evening in a crowded market in the city of Tal Afar, killing at least 21 people and wounding dozens, police and U.S. officials said. Tensions have been rising among ethnic groups throughout the north because of a dispute over control of the oil-rich area around Kirkuk - claimed by Arabs, Turkomen and Kurds. The order from al-Sadr, who mounted two uprisings against U.S.-led forces in 2004, was read to his followers during weekly Friday prayers in Shiite mosques across the country.

Focus

CEO pay chugs up in '07 despite economy

NEW YORK (AP)—As the American economy slowed to a crawl and stockholders watched their money evaporate, CEO pay still chugged to yet more dizzying heights last year, an Associated Press analysis shows.

The AP review of compensation for the heads of companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index finds the median pay package added up to nearly $8.4 million. That's a comfortable gain of about $280,000 from 2006.

The 3 1/2 percent pay increase for CEOs came even as the landscape for both workers and shareholders darkened considerably and the economy was choked by a housing market in free fall, layoffs and soaring prices for fuel and food.

At the top of the AP list: John Thain, who took the reins of Merrill Lynch on Dec. 1, 2007. His $83 million pay package was supercharged by a signing bonus and other enticements that lured him from the New York Stock Exchange to lead the investment bank as it was suffering its worst-ever losses.

Collectively, the 10 best-paid CEOs made more than half a billion dollars last year. Yet half the members of this stratospheric club were leading companies whose profits shrank dramatically.

The AP examination of CEO pay in 2007 mined data from the 410 companies in the S&P 500 that filed compensation disclosures with federal regulators in the first six months of this year.

The AP's formula, based on data from the past two years, adds up salary, perks, bonuses, above-market interest on pay set aside for later, and company estimates for the value of stock options and stock awards on the day they were granted last year.

That provides a clearer picture than pay totals required by the Securities and Exchange Commission, compensation experts say, because the SEC totals include expenses companies book during the year for previously granted stock compensation and retirement benefits.

The value of stock and options given to CEOs may turn out to be significantly higher or lower if they are ultimately cashed out, but the numbers in the AP formula do reflect the board of directors' estimate of the likely eventual payout.

The median salary figure of about $8.4 million means half the CEOs in the AP analysis made more than that and half made less.

There were some signs companies were pulling back on pay at the top: Out of the 316 companies in the AP survey that had the same CEO two years running, about two-fifths lowered the total pay package for their CEOs. However, the primary culprit for some was falling stock prices that cut into the value of the shares included in pay packages.

In many more cases, overall pay ballooned.

Rick Wagoner, chief executive of General Motors Corp., announced earlier this month the company had to close four plants that make trucks and SUVs because of lagging demand as fuel prices soar. That followed the posting of a $39 billion loss in 2007, a year when its stock price fell by about 19 percent, without adjusting for dividends.

And Wagoner? His pay rose 64 percent, to $15.7 million.

Last year was rocky for the economy and the stock market, making it a useful test of a concept called pay for performance—a term companies use to sell shareholders on the idea CEOs are being paid based on how well the company does.

According to this concept, trotted out frequently by the compensation committees of corporate boards in their proxy statements, a big chunk of CEO pay is considered "at risk," meaning it could disappear if CEOs don't meet established metrics.

But the AP analysis found that CEO pay rose and fell regardless of the direction of a company's stock price or profits.

Take KB Home, battered by the subprime lending crisis and the weak housing market. According to the Los Angeles-based homebuilder's proxy statement, CEO Jeffrey Mezger is entitled to a cash bonus based on a percentage of KB's profit.

The problem was there was no profit. KB Home lost almost $930 million in 2007 and its stock lost 60 percent of its value. But Mezger still made $24.4 million, as valued by the AP, including a $6 million cash bonus.

He pocketed that bonus because he exceeded certain objectives the board had set out for him. Among them were improving performance on a customer satisfaction survey and developing senior leadership in his first year as CEO.

"Compensation has become a shell game," said Richard Ferlauto, director of pension and benefits policy for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, a Washington labor group representing government workers.

"So they take away the bonus," he said, "but then they still come up with ways to make sure the executive gets a big payout."

Pay packages were somewhat smaller in the financial industry last year—banks, investment firms, mortgage companies, insurers and other institutions, all were roiled by the subprime lending disaster.

For companies in the financial sector that had the same CEO two years in a row, median pay dropped 4 1/4 percent to $8.7 million in 2007. But that was still a smaller decline than the 6 percent drop in earnings and 15 percent slump in stock prices before dividend adjustments, according to Standard & Poor's Capital IQ data service.

In some cases, companies appeared at first glance to have kept their promise to base pay on performance—only to have a different picture emerge on closer inspection.

For example, Washington Mutual Inc.'s stock took a nosedive last year—almost 70 percent—because of fallout from the housing and mortgage crises. The Seattle-base banking and mortgage lender lost $1.87 billion in the fourth quarter alone, and $67 million for the year.

WaMu's board decided not to give CEO Kerry Killinger a bonus for 2007. But board members also eliminated real-estate foreclosures and mortgage defaults as factors in whether to award him a bonus this year. After a shareholder revolt, the board decided to revise the formula, though it has not yet announced what metrics will be used.

Profit at insurer XL Capital fell more than 80 percent last year, and its stock price slumped about 30 percent. But Chief Executive Brian O'Hara made $7.5 million, a raise of 23 percent.

In its proxy statement, the company called its profits "unsatisfactory" but said operating earnings, which exclude certain factors, were better than planned.

O'Hara, who plans to retire later this year, was also given 62,500 shares of restricted stock and 250,000 stock options, which were not included in the calculation of his total compensation. The company said that was to "reflect the importance of Mr. O'Hara's role in the CEO succession process."

"The cracks in the idea of pay for performance really start to show when performance falters but pay still rises," said Paul Hodgson, senior research associate at The Corporate Library, an independent corporate governance research firm. "It's always a win-win scenario for executives."

Even companies with huge profits and soaring stock prices can be faulted for not following the principle of pay for performance, according to some experts on corporate pay.

As an example, these experts cite the energy industry, where CEOs in the AP survey chalked up a median 32 percent gain in 2007.

It's no secret that profits at oil and gas companies have raced higher in recent years, and stock prices have followed. But that's not necessarily because CEOs are more skillful at operating their businesses. The boon has more to do with the surge in the price of oil, which this year topped $130 a barrel for the first time on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

"The issue of an escalated price of oil shouldn't flow back in to executives' wallets, but to shareholders in the form of higher dividends," said activist investor Gerald R. Armstrong of Denver, who owns shares in XTO Energy Inc.

XTO's CEO Bob Simpson, with annual compensation of more than $50 million, has ranked in the AP's list of the 10 highest-paid chief executives for the past two years.

Pay consultants say that illustrates a weakness in executive pay programs. When outside factors help the bottom line, CEOs tend to benefit personally as well. But the opposite is not generally true, said Bill Coleman, chief compensation officer for Salary.com, which provides corporate pay information.

"How convenient," he said. "I take credit for everything good and I blame external factors for anything bad, but say that shouldn't affect my pay."

There were examples of companies that really did cut back on pay during a bad year.

Department store operator Dillard's Inc., plagued by falling sales, profits and stock value, cut CEO William Dillard's pay package by two-thirds, to $1.1 million, according to the AP calculation.

Of course, compensation is not always designed to reflect how the company does in the year it's handed out. Sometimes boards give out bonuses to the CEO for a strong performance a year earlier, and sometimes they are pegged to future performance goals.

At investment bank Morgan Stanley, CEO John Mack was paid a total of $41.7 million for 2007, a rough year for the bank. That made him No. 8 on the AP list of CEOs.

But Mack's pay was largely tied to his performance in 2006. The investment bank said in February that Mack would not be taking home a bonus for 2007 because of the company's heavy losses in the subprime lending crisis.

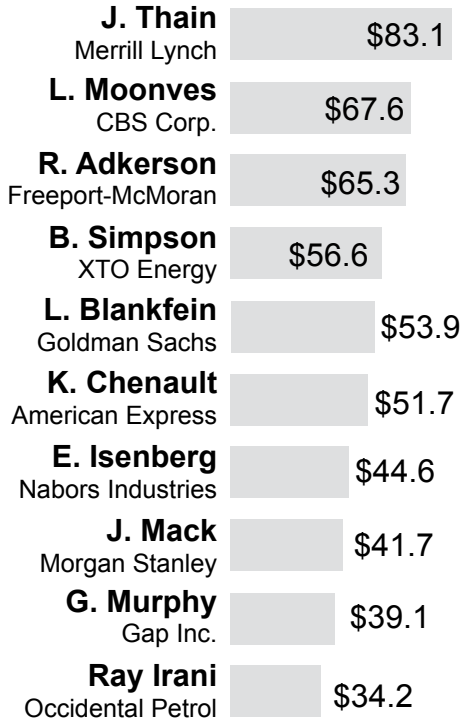
At Merrill Lynch, part of Thain's $83.1 million pay package hinges on whether the stock rises. He got options on 1.8 million shares as part of his signing agreement, but two-thirds of them will only vest if the price of Merrill stock clears specific hurdles for 15 straight trading days.

Right now Merrill shares trade at about $35, far from the $80 a share level that has to be reached for the first bundle of Thain's options to be in the money.

Top paid CEOs

According to Associated Press calculations, Merrill Lynch's John Thain was paid more than any other executive at S&P 500 companies 2007.

S&P 500 highest paid CEOs, compensation in millions



NOTE: Pay figures are rounded and based on a formula combining salary, perks, bonuses, above-market interest on pay set aside for later, and company estimates for the value of stock options and stock awards

AP

Merrill Lynch CEO John Thain, left, shakes hands with Ameriprise Financial, Inc. Chairman and CEO James M. Cracchiolo on the NYSE trading floor. Thain is at the top of the heap among the heftiest paid CEOs in the country.

Life & Style

The rebirth of the denim skirt

By AMY SCATTERGOOD
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Turning a much-loved, overworn pair of jeans into a skirt isn't a new idea—nimble sewers have done it for decades—but making the results look chic took the happy rediscovery of the mini.

It's a trend that belongs to the street—jean skirts were the coverup of choice at the recent U.S. Open of Surfing in Huntington Beach, Calif., and the paparazzi are catching model Agyness Deyn and other leggy style leaders wearing them just about everywhere—but now even fashion houses such as Chanel are turning out super-distressed denim minis.

Of course, there are some big differences between the ones that look hot today and the ones that looked hot 20 years ago. Remember those jeans conversions with a triangle of fabric—think flowers, tie-dye—sewn between the legs? Yeah, well, if you do, resist the nostalgia.

Instead, think of the jean skirt this way: Now that straight-leg boyfriend jeans are chic again, these are the skirt translation. Casual, slung low on the hip, neither jailbait short nor too roomy and unkempt, these minis might be a tomboy's idea of a tolerable skirt. No pleats or detailing, no designer rah-rahs—just the classic five-pocket jean.

And like the old straight-leg Levi's, these skirts like flip-flops, casual sandals and a plain T-shirt or linen. You want casual, not trashy.

You can use any old pair of jeans, either ones you've been kicking around in for years or a vintage pair from a thrift store. Levi's have the trim fit and thick, durable weight that you want, as well as the minimalist styling that makes these skirts instant classics.

The trick is to start with jeans that ride down a little on your hips, that are roomy enough to allow for comfortable movement after you're done and that won't require any additional fabric when you're making the conversion from pants to skirt.

It's an easy cut across both legs, a satisfying amount of seam-ripping, some quick stitching, a wash and dry to fray the edges—and you're done.

Call it denim reincarnation.

How to make yourself a jean skirt

(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times

Time: About 45 minutes, plus washing and drying
Materials: One pair of old jeans, scissors, seam ripper, thread, pins, sewing machine.

1 Put the jeans on and mark a spot about 4 inches above the knee with a pin. This will be the hem of the skirt (if you want it shorter, place the pin higher—but no higher than 3 inches below the crotch seam).

2 Smooth the jeans out on a work surface. Measure the length from the top of the waistband to the pin, and mark the distance across both legs. Cut straight across both legs, about an inch below where you marked, to give yourself a little leeway (you can trim later, after you've tried on the skirt).

3 Turn the jeans inside out. Using a seam ripper, rip out the crotch seams, taking out all the stitches up to the zipper. In the back, take out the bottom 3 inches of the center seam (so you can eliminate any bunching).

4 Turn the jeans right-side out again and smooth out on a work surface. Fold the flap below the zipper over the fabric underneath (left over right), to create a zigzag front seam below the zipper. Place the fabric so that it falls smoothly, with no flare. Pin in place.

5 Flip the jeans over. Pin the back seam together, eliminating some fabric so that it doesn't flare and so that the center seam is straight.

6 On a sewing machine, sew the front and back seams, tracing the original seam lines and making sure to back-stitch at the top and bottom to secure the seams.

7 Try on the skirt, adjust the length if necessary and make sure the edges are straight. Sew around the edge of the skirt, about half an inch up from the raw edge (do not make a hem). Trim the threads. Wash and dry the skirt to fray the edges.

Bacon makes everything better——even chocolate?

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (AP)—Here are three little words that might give the staunchest snacker pause: Chocolate-covered bacon.

It sounds so wrong. But it tastes just right, says Joseph Marini III, a fourth-generation candy maker who is selling the bacon bonbons at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk seaside amusement park.

"It's not just for breakfast any more," he says with a grin.

And this isn't just a wacky West Coast thing.

This year, Famous Dave's at the Minnesota State Fair is rolling out Pig Lickers—dark chocolate-covered bacon pieces sprinkled with sea salt.

"It's just like the most bizarre combination," says fair spokeswoman Brienna Schuette. "I actually really liked it. It was a good combination of sweet and salty."

The urge to create new flavor profiles is a natural for a field driven by creativity, says Karen Page, co-author with Andrew Dornenburg of the forthcoming "The Flavor Bible," a sort of field guide to flavor pairings.

Chefs have two basic agents of change: using a different cooking method or mixing up flavors. So a classic such as tomatoes and basil might get turned into tomato sorbet with a basil sauce. Or you might find unorthodox couplings, such as salads of watermelon and feta or cotton candy with foie gras.

"There's a whole trend toward chefs pushing the boundaries," says Page. "Chefs are trying to be more playful and incorporate new kinds of whimsy."

It's hard to tell exactly where the dream of candy-coated breakfast meats started, but for Marini, the inspiration was a trip with some ski buddies a while back.

AP

A piece of bacon about to be coated in chocolate at Marini's candy shop at the Boardwalk amusement park in Santa Cruz, Calif., Friday, July 11, 2008.

"One guy came up with, 'Who doesn't love bacon? Who doesn't love chocolate? Let's marry them together.'"

So Marini gave it a shot and after some trial and error - crispness is key, he says, noting that chewy bacon plus chocolate is undelicious—he came up with a product.

"It was kind of a joke to begin with," he says. "We brought it down to the boardwalk and put it in a case just to see if people would react, and they reacted."

Take boardwalk visitor Nathan Lopez, who on a recent foggy morning had a quizzical look on his face as he began eating a sample at Marini's at the Beach. But he finished with a smile.

"Interesting combination," was the verdict. "I didn't think it would be very good but once I tried it; it was good."

Of course, chocolate-coated bacon is just the latest incarnation of the wackier-the-better fair food philosophy.

Fair food has been shaking up the snack scene for some time, says Ron Whiting, of Whiting's Foods, whose family has been selling food at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk for decades.

"Years ago, I think food tended to be more traditional and less fun," he says. Then came the corn dog and the era of quick and on-a-stick. "We all talk about the next corn dog," he says.

Fry, fry again is a persistent theme. Current popular snacks include deep-fried Twinkies and Oreos.

Page, who admits to eating "more than my fair share of fried dough," notes that gourmet chefs have taken to putting food—just about any food—on a stick, coming up with some posh Popsicles. Meanwhile, there's the foie gras-cotton candy matchup, not a stretch flavor-wise since foie gras usually is paired with something sweet, but certainly visually arresting.

"It's the melding of both these worlds, the high end and the low end," said Page.

Never underestimate the appeal of battered-is-better.

'Star Trek Online' is ready to beam up

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Star Trek Online" is finally going warp speed ahead.

After years in development limbo, the "Trek"-themed massively multiplayer online game will engage, according to game developer Cryptic Studios Inc.

Jack Emmert, Cryptic Chief Creative Officer, said players will begin "Star Trek Online" as the captain of a small Starfleet or Klingon Empire ship. They can customize their characters from pre-existing "Trek" species - from Klingons to Gorn - and can create entirely new alien races. As they progress through the game, players can increase in rank and gain larger vessels and more crew.

"You'll venture through space exploring new civilizations and life-forms," said Emmert. "You'll also beam down to planets and have adventures inside your ship. It's a galactic-wide game. There's going to be tons of space to investigate. We have a great system for exploration, which will allow for almost infinite possibilities."

Cryptic recently announced it had secured the rights to develop and publish "Star Trek Online" from CBS Consumer Products after now-defunct Perpetual Entertainment set the besieged project to kill.

"We had a friendly relationship with them," Emmert said. "As it became apparent they weren't going to continue to function, they decided to sell off the license. We swooped in and grabbed it. We took no assets. There was nothing to be had, to be honest. We're building everything from the ground up."

Players will also be able to battle against other vessels in laser-blasting, missile-firing deep space scuffles reminiscent of "The Wrath of Khan" and the Dominion War in "Deep Space Nine." Because the game will be set a few generations following the last "Trek" film, players shouldn't expect to run into James T. Kirk or Jean-Luc Picard.

"There might be a ship called Enterprise flying around, but it's probably not the same ship anymore," said Emmert. "Most of the characters will have either retired or passed on, but you'll definitely be going to all the places you know and love from 'Star Trek.' Expect to see oldies like Vulcan and Bajor but also fan favorites like Andoria and Qo'noS."

Emmert plans to unveil footage and more details about "Star Trek Online"—which has no release date set—with Leonard Nimoy at a "Star Trek" convention Sunday in Las Vegas at the Gene Roddenberry Theater inside the Las Vegas Hilton. The "Star Trek Online" panel will also be broadcast live at StarTrekOnline.com.

AP

In this photo released by Cryptic Studios shows the logo for "Star Trek Online".

"You're going to see the actual game working and functioning," said Emmert. "This isn't renders. This isn't concept art. Everything that people will see on Sunday is going to be taken right from 'Star Trek Online' as it stands today, so hardened people should know that a release date might be closer than they think."

Cryptic, the developer originally responsible for "City of Heroes" and "City of Villains," is also working on the superhero-themed online game "Champions Online," scheduled for release for Windows PC and Xbox 360 next year. Emmert said "Star Trek Online" would definitely be available for Windows PC and perhaps Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3.

Other online games based on popular entertainment franchises include "The Lord of the Rings Online," "The Matrix Online," "Pirates of the Caribbean Online" and "Star Wars Galaxies." Sony Online Entertainment is currently developing "DC Universe Online" while MGM Interactive is working on "Stargate Worlds."

THREE WISE GUYS

Flea markets, space fish and sunburn

By JOE HEIM, JUSTIN RUDE and DAN ZAK
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THE WASHINGTON POST

The Washington Post offers Three Wise Guys, advice on life and other stuff from the male perspective, perpetrated by Post staffers, from left, Justin Rude, Joe Heim and Dan Zak. It may not be professional advice, but their responses to reader questions serve up a deft handling of any conceivable topic.

Dear Wise Guys:

You guys are the best. My husband and I listen to your show every morning.

My husband has a question for you. As usual, without a doubt, we know that one of you guys will come up with the right answer. Why do we call a flea market a flea market?—Delina

Joe: Some say it's because everything being sold is probably flea-infested. Another is that you should flee before buying anything. But enough about that. I just want to thank you for listening to our show every day. Wait ... what show?

Justin: Uh, nothing, Joe.

Dan: We should probably tell him.

Justin: Should we?

Dan: We should. Joe, we've had a radio show for some time now. The affiliate asked that Justin and I handle the calls. They think that while you have a face for radio, you don't have a voice for it.

Joe: This all sounds fishy to me. And speaking of fishy ...

■■■

Dear Wise Guys:

I've read that Saturn's moon Enceladus may harbor life and possibly even fish. I've always liked to try new things. When do you think that NASA will bring some back for us to eat?—Hugh

Joe: With all the concern about fish from Mercury being bad for you, I'm not sure I'd trust fish from any other planets, either. That said, I've heard the enchiladas from Enceladus are out of this world.

Dan: No, dillweed. Mercury IN fish is bad. Fish from Enceladus are likely to be extra scaly, given the moon's name, which comes from a dragonlike giant from Greek mythology who is responsible for all the earthquakes that happen today.

Justin: I wanted to laugh at this question, but at the rate we are cleaning out our own oceans, fish from outer space won't seem so unreasonable for long.

Dan: Don't try to baffle us with your crypto-eco-socialist garbage.

Joe: You guys are venturing into extremist political commentary. Save it for your imaginary radio show.

■■■

Dear Wise Guys:

I just returned from two glorious weeks at the beach, where I observed most every part of the human anatomy sunburned to a lobster red, with one exception: the palms of hands. What gives? Is the human palm made of some super burn-free type of skin?—David

Dan: No, the palms are burnable. We just don't lie down or walk around with them facing the sun. At least, this is our educated guess. To confirm, we dialed Washington dermatologist Sandra Read, who basically said—and I'm paraphrasing here—"Duh."

We also called Lynn McKinley-Grant, a dermatologist in Chevy Chase, Md. She said the skin on the palms is thicker, which makes palms more resistant to burning and results in fewer skin cells that produce pigment. This makes them less likely to get color than other parts of the body.

That said, both doctors have patients who come in with burned and blistered palms and soles. Which doesn't make sense, because aren't we applying sunscreen with our palms? Therefore, shouldn't they be the most protected part of the body? Am I the first person to make this connection? It is lonely in this tower of brilliance.

Joe: You put on your own sunscreen? I have people to do that for me.

Dan: How much do you give Justin for that?

Joe: He pays me.

■■■

It's contest time! The Three Wise Guys need a motto. A tag line, if you will. A mantra. Something with which to brand our wisdom. Like, "Wiser Than Your Average Journalist" or "Three Geniuses in a Pod (With Great Bods)" or "There but for the Grace of God Go They (Them?)" OK, come up with something better.

E-mail your suggestion (as well as any questions you need answered) to wiseguys@washpost.com by Aug. 8 and put "motto" in the subject line. We'll pick our favorite. The submitter will receive a guest spot in a future column. Friends and family of the Wise Guys are permitted to participate, as are felons and children under 18 but over 3.

Ex-Bush aide claims 'Swing Vote' stolen from him

NEW YORK (AP)—A former presidential aide claims in a lawsuit that plot and marketing elements of the Kevin Costner and Kelsey Grammer movie "Swing Vote" were stolen from him.

Political commentator Bradley Blakeman, a former deputy assistant to President Bush for appointments and scheduling, said in the lawsuit filed Thursday that he gave a copyrighted screenplay entitled "Go November" to Grammer in 2006.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court on Long Island, claims Grammer agreed to develop the project and star as an incumbent Republican president but ended up portraying a similar role in "Swing Vote," which was released Aug. 1.

A spokesman for Grammer and his production company, both named in the lawsuit, dismissed the claims as frivolous.

"I am not sure why Kelsey was even named in this suit," spokesman Stan Rosenfield wrote in an e-mail. "He was an actor who signed on to the project AFTER the script was written."

Blakeman's lawsuit, however, claims the former "Cheers" and "Frasier" actor told him to consult a producer who later told him repeatedly that they were interviewing potential screenwriters and planned to go ahead with the project.

The lawsuit claims Blakeman's screenplay shared a basic premise with "Swing Vote," although it focused on an election hinging on multiple swing voters instead of one swing voter.

Blakeman claims "Swing Vote" incorporated other elements that he proposed, including: the timing of the film's release, the use of real-life newscasters as actors playing themselves, the use of dirty tricks by both major political parties, marketing strategies and other plot points.

AP

In a Sept. 27, 2007, file photo Bradley Blakeman poses in Lafayette Square Park in Washington. Blakeman claims in a lawsuit filed Thursday, Aug. 7, 2008, that plot and marketing elements of the Kevin Costner and Kelsey Grammer movie "Swing Vote" were stolen from him.

"Essentially, except for the character names and the relationship developed between the main characters played by defendant Kevin Costner and his daughter, the entire concept of 'Swing Vote' ... was taken from the copyrighted work," Blakeman's lawsuit claims.

The Walt Disney Co. is named as a defendant in the suit, as is Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group Inc. and Disney division Touchstone Pictures, which distributed "Swing Vote." Costner and the writers of "Swing Vote" also are among those named.

Spokeswomen for Disney and for distributor Treehouse Films said they hadn't seen the lawsuit and wouldn't comment. A spokesman for Costner, who helped finance the movie, said the "Dances with Wolves" and "Field of Dreams" actor was on vacation and couldn't be reached.

Blakeman's lawsuit seeks unspecified damages.

Grammer was hospitalized in New York in late July after feeling faint, which Rosenfield said was possibly due to his heart medication. Grammer suffered a mild heart attack in late May.

Mia Farrow to air alternative 'Darfur Olympics'

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP)—As the Summer Games open in Beijing, actress activist Mia Farrow is Web-casting her own "Darfur Olympics" from a refugee camp on the barren Sudan-Chad border, aiming to shame China into using its influence with Khartoum to end the Darfur conflict.

Human rights groups have been using the Beijing Olympics to highlight accusations that China's close ties to the Khartoum government are helping fuel the bloodshed in Darfur, where up to 300,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million people driven from their homes since 2003.

China buys nearly two-thirds of Sudan's oil and is believed to provide the country with most of its small arms, many of which human rights groups say end up being used in Sudan's western region of Darfur. Beijing, which has veto power at the U.N., has resisted tough Security Council action against Sudan over the conflict.

At the same time as the opening ceremony in Beijing on Friday, Farrow will post footage on the Web from one of a dozen camps in eastern Chad where Darfurians fleeing the conflict have taken refuge. The Webcast is to include refugee children playing sports and songs contributed by pop singers including REM, Bette Midler and Taleb Kweli. Each day for the first week of the Beijing games, Farrow will post new Web-casts with "voices from the camps," including interviews with women and children.

The footage will provide viewers around the world a glimpse of the "deplorable" conditions in these camps, Farrow told The Associated Press on Thursday by satellite telephone from a camp in eastern Chad. She would not identify the camp for security reasons.

If people want to skip the "opening propaganda ceremony" in Beijing, they can "watch the opening ceremony we put together," Farrow said.

"The Olympic Games should be cause for celebration ... the decision to hold the games in Beijing is beyond comprehension," she said. "With China underwriting the suffering in Darfur and hosting the Olympic games at home, there is an incongruity that everyone attending the game, participating in the games and covering the games can't ignore."

Some 250,000 Darfurians live in the refugee camps in Chad. Another nearly 2.5 million people displaced by the fighting remain in Darfur, most in camps.

Farrow's Dream for Darfur group has called the Olympics the "Genocide Games." China barred from entering the country a Dream for Darfur member, Jill Savitt, who had planned to take the video made by Farrow to reporters in China, where the Web site is blocked.

Last month, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir was indicted by the Netherlands-based International Criminal Court on charges of genocide in Darfur. Khartoum is accused of unleashing the Arab militias known as the janjaweed to put down ethnic African rebel groups that rose up in 2003. The janjaweed, in turn, are accused of carrying out a campaign of atrocities, killing and raping ethnic African civilians and burning their villages. Khartoum denies supporting the janjaweed.

Jerry Fowler, the president of the New York-based Save Darfur Coalition, said that in light of the ICC charges of genocide, China must "stop being the enabler of genocide in Darfur and start putting pressure and using leverage on Khartoum to stop the violence, to protect civilians and to bring about a lasting peace."

China says its arms sales to Sudan fall outside of the scope of a U.N. arms embargo on the provision of arms to Darfur, and that it is acting to bring peace to Darfur.

Sudanese officials decline to comment on the weapons sales, but say China has helped Sudan build roads, electricity grids, hospitals and other infrastructure.

"The Sudanese people view China as a friendly country," Mahjoub Faidul, a presidential spokesman, told The Associated Press.

Al-Bashir is staying home for the games, where Sudan has nine athletes competing. Sudanese officials say al-Bashir is too busy handling the aftermath of the indictment to attend.

AP

In this photo released by www.stopgenocidenow.org, actress activist Mia Farrow shows a photo to Sudanese refugee children at a refugee camp in eastern Chad Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2008.

Katie Holmes chops the bob down to a pixie

NEW YORK (AP)—Katie Holmes just keeps taking it off. Mrs. Tom Cruise, who made a huge hairstyle splash when she helped fuel Hollywood's bob craze late last year, has been seen out and about in New York with a new pixie cut. Photos popping up on the Internet show Holmes sporting a shaggier version of the short 'do, with long bangs and a tapered neck.

The style was popular in the late '80s and early '90s, according to celebrity hairstylist Porsche Waldo, adding that Rihanna has a similar cut that is more "spiky" and "punklike."

Last year, Holmes sheared off her long locks to create a sleek bob that some compared to the look popularized by Victoria Beckham, Holmes' friend. Internet critics weighed in: Some loved it, others hated it, sniping that Holmes looked like her then 1-year-old daughter Suri.

Stylists are greeting the new 'do with mixed reviews.

"I'm personally not crazy about the look on anyone," says celebrity stylist and beauty expert Billy Lowe, adding that the cut with its soft neckline reminds him of a wig. "I liked her much better in the bob. I thought it was really sophisticated, very chic and very trendy."

Stacy London, co-host of TLC's "What Not to Wear," raved about the cut, saying it fit her face and her fashion persona much better.

"This whole sort of fashion evolution since becoming Mrs. Tom Cruise, I think it has taken her time to find her sea-legs," says London. "This haircut is clearly a step in the right direction."

The 29-year-old Holmes, who played Joey Potter on "Dawson's Creek" from 1998 to 2003, is in New York preparing to star in a revival of Arthur Miller's "All My Sons," which goes into previews Sept. 18.

'60s songwriter Erik Darling dies at 74

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Erik Darling, the reedy-voiced guitarist and banjo player who deftly stepped in when Pete Seeger left the pioneering folk music group The Weavers, has died after battling lymphoma. He was 74.

He died Sunday in Chapel Hill, not far from Raleigh.

Darling was perhaps best known for his hit "Walk Right In" and for his arrangement of the iconic Southern true-crime ballad "Tom Dooley," which inspired The Kingston Trio's recording of the song that topped the charts in 1958. He was a member of the Tarriers, known for its version of "The Banana Boat Song (Day-O)" - the signature tune of Harry Belafonte.

Darling also replaced Seeger in the Weavers in the late 1950s, a few years after the band was blacklisted for its political views.

Fred Hellerman, an original member of the group, said he learned of his friend's death by e-mail earlier this week.

"He was immensely talented - immensely talented," Hellerman, 81, said Thursday in a telephone interview from his home in Weston, Conn. "When he came into the Weavers to replace Pete Seeger, which was a pretty tall order, he not only did that, but he brought so much of his own talents to bear that it was overwhelming. It really was."

Hellerman said Darling moved to Chapel Hill a couple of years ago to be near Willard Svanoe, a fellow member of The Rooftop Singers, the band with which he recorded "Walk Right In," a No. 1 hit for Vanguard Records in 1963.

In an e-mail posted on Darling's Web site, Svanoe said Darling died early Aug. 3.

The Weavers first burst on the scene in 1948 in Greenwich Village and had their first national hit in 1950 with "Goodnight Irene." But during the red scare of the 1950s, their politics came under scrutiny and the group was brought in to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

They soon found themselves blacklisted, and disbanded in 1953. It wasn't until a Christmas 1955 concert at Carnegie Hall that they re-emerged to rejoin the national folk music revival they'd helped launch.

"He was an absolutely logical person to be brought in" after Seeger's departure, Hellerman said. "Of the next generation of Weavers, I mean he was so outstanding that it was hard then or even now to imagine who else we could have brought in other than Erik."

Hellerman said he didn't learn until many years later that Darling was uncomfortable with his band mates' leftist leanings.

Jill Jackson's Hollywood

By JILL JACKSON

(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Lisa Kudrow

HOLLYWOOD—Grammy nominated many times for her albums, singer Avril Lavigne, only 23 years old, recently sold her five-bedroom, six-bath Beverly Hills mansion for $5.2 million. Not bad when you're barely out of your teens. Just in case you didn't know, her debut album "Let Go" went platinum six times. In this album is her song "Complicated," which earned five Grammy nominations. In July 2006, Avril married Deryck Whibley, lead singer and guitarist with pop punk band SUM 41.

Gas prices are affecting the glitterati out this way. And definitely the ones who tootled around town in Bentleys, Rolls Royces, Massaratis and the like -- all BIG gas guzzlers. Distances out here are great, there are very few taxicabs and the public transit system leaves much to be desired. Soooo, many are latching on to hydrogen-powered cars. Filling their tanks isn't easy. It must be done by a trained professional. Others who are agile enough have taken to bicycles and motorcycles, and those who can still afford it just "fill 'er up" at the gas station -- and pay the price.

Some of your favorite TV characters have taken to the big screen in a film titled "Kabluey," and it's lots of fun. There's Lisa Kudrow, Teri Garr, Christine Taylor, Conchata Gerrell, Chris Parnell and Jeffrey Dean Morgan in this romp about the mother (Kudrow) of two rambunctious boys trying to hold things together while her husband is fighting in Iraq. Desperate for help, she gets her husband's brother in as a makeshift nanny. His skills are lacking, and all hell breaks loose. So go see the picture and find out what happens.

Aside to Rhea H. of Savannah, Ga. Cyd Charisse's given name was Tula Ellice Finklea. She was born in Texas. When she became a star, the MGM studio bigwigs felt the name was far too unglamorous, so they changed it to Cyd Charisse. She was a wonderful dancer and a very nice person, but I found her rather difficult to interview. She just wasn't talkative. Her feet and legs did the talking, and believe me, her dancing was worth watching.

I don't know how many of you watch "The Late Show." I do, because I find it hard to believe what I am seeing. David Letterman gets his laughs by making fun of people. I don't buy it, but if you watch, that's what you get. And how he can allow some of the inane things to happen beats me. BUT, like an idiot, I keep on watching and get madder and madder. Then when he does an interview, instead of asking about things we'd like to know about the person, he ALWAYS get on the subject of their kids and his kid, Harry. So, OK Jill, turn the dial and watch Leno!

■■■

BITS 'N' PIECES: It will be the "wearin' o' the green" when L.A. hosts its first Irish film festival in October. ... Even though Patrick Swayze has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he's carrying on with "The Beast" for the A&E network. ... No Paris sightings at this writing. Ditto Lindsay. ... Did you know that before they became famous, Robert Redford was a sidewalk artist; Alan Alda was a clown, a taxicab driver and a doorman; Warren Beatty was a rat-catcher; Sean Connery was a polisher for a coffin maker; Burt Reynolds was a ballroom bouncer; and Ronald Reagan was a lifeguard?

McConaughey to plant son's placenta in orchard

NEW YORK (AP)—Matthew McConaughey says the birth of his son will help bring a little joy to others in the world someday. The actor kept the placenta from the July birth of his son and plans to plant it in an orchard, he tells CNN's "House Call with Dr. Sanjay Gupta" in interview scheduled to air in two parts Aug. 9 and Aug 16.

McConaughey says he hopes it will fertilize the land, a ritual long followed in several cultures.

"It's going to be in the orchards and it's going to bear some wonderful fruit," he says, according to an interview transcript. "When I was in Australia, they had a placenta tree that was on the river ... and all the placentas of all that tribe, all that clan, whatever aboriginal tribe that was, all the placentas went under that one tree and it was this huge behemoth of just health and strength.

"This tree was just growing taller and stronger above the rest of Mother Nature around it. It was gorgeous."

McConaughey also says he and his girlfriend Camila Alves have enjoyed integrating their new baby, Levi Alves McConaughey, into their lives. Already they've started introducing him to the "sights and the sounds" of the world - including a John Mellencamp concert.

"You're never told in our house, 'Shh, Levi is sleeping.' No. Get used to the ambiance. Come with us. That's how I was raised," he says.

AP

In this Aug. 7, 2008 file photo, actor Matthew McConaughey and Camila Alves attend the Muxo Private Launch Party in Los Angeles.

'American Idol' crooner Clay Aiken now a father

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Former "American Idol" runner-up Clay Aiken is a father. The 29-year-old crooner from Raleigh announced the birth of Parker Foster Aiken on his Web site's blog Friday. "No hyphens. One first name," he wrote. "One middle name. One last name."

Aiken

Aiken's mother, Faye, told Raleigh TV station WRAL the child was born in North Carolina.

Aiken was a favorite of fans during the second season of "American Idol," where he finished second to Ruben Studdard. His album "Measure of a Man" went double platinum in 2003, and he made his Broadway debut this spring in "Monty Python's Spamalot."

The baby's mother is Jaymes Foster, Aiken's friend and record producer whom he met while performing on "American Idol." Their son was born at 8:08 a.m. Friday, and weighed 6 pounds, 2 ounces and was 19 inches long, according to the statement on the Web site.

"The little man is healthy, happy, and as loud as his daddy," Aiken wrote. "Mama Jaymes is doing quite well also."

Richard Dreyfuss sues father, uncle over loan

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Richard Dreyfuss is suing his father and uncle over an $870,000 loan he claims was never repaid. The lawsuit centers around a loan Dreyfuss claims he made to his relatives in 1984, who owned an interest in a downtown Los Angeles office building.

Roughly 24 years later, Dreyfuss says that loan - and interest - remains unpaid.

In his lawsuit filed Friday, Dreyfuss says his uncle, Gilbert Dreyfuss, has repeatedly refused to turn over records that would show its financial status.

Phone and e-mail messages left for Gilbert Dreyfuss were not immediately returned. A woman who answered the phone at an address registered to Dreyfuss' father, Norman, said he could not be reached there.

Dreyfuss alleges his uncle and father, Norman Dreyfuss, have acted with "fraud" and "malice." He is seeking a repayment of the loan, plus interest and punitive damages.

Philip Seymour Hoffman to direct play in London

LONDON (AP)—Producers say Oscar-winning actor Philip Seymour Hoffman will direct a play in London's West End later this year.

"Riflemind" tells the story of a rock band getting back together 20 years after its members split up.

The play is by Australian writer Andrew Upton, husband of Hollywood star Cate Blanchett. The production will star Scottish actor John Hannah, whose films include "Four Weddings and a Funeral" and "The Mummy" series.

Hoffman is co-artistic director of New York's LAByrinth Theater Company. He won a best-actor Oscar in 2006 for "Capote."

AP

In this May 23, 2008 file photo, actor Philip Seymour Hoffman arrives for the premiere of " Synecdoche, New York" during the 61st International film festival in Cannes, southern France.

Producers announced Friday that "Riflemind" will open September 18th at London's Trafalgar Studios.

Happy New Year: Clark, Seacrest a duo through 2010

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dick Clark is still Mr. New Year's Eve—but he'll be sharing the title with Ryan Seacrest.

Starting this December, Clark's longtime end-of-year special will be called "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve With Ryan Seacrest," ABC and dick clark productions said Friday.

It was also announced that Seacrest will serve as co-host with Clark and as an executive producer on the broadcast for another three years, through the 2010 show ringing in 2011.

The show's name change reflects Seacrest's success in co-hosting "one of America's most time-honored traditions," Orly Adelson, executive producer and president of dick clark productions, said in a statement.

"New Year's Rockin' Eve" will mark its 37th year on Dec. 31 and include the customary countdown to midnight from New York City's Times Square.

Seacrest, host of "American Idol," joined the program in December 2005, signing a deal that would eventually make him the program's host. Clark had a stroke earlier that month but appeared on the '05 show and in following years, his speech affected but enthusiasm intact.

The program was the top-rated New Year's Eve show last year, drawing 29 million viewers at the midnight hour.

Deadbeat owners abandon pets as well as their homes

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I work for a major lending company and have cleaned out foreclosed homes. Too many times, I find animals who have died from exposure or literally starved to death.

My message to homeowners is: PLEASE make arrangements for your pets if you can't take them with you. Once a loan company notifies you of foreclosure, it can be many weeks before someone enters that home. Give your pet a fighting chance!

DISCOURAGED IN ILLINOIS

DEAR DISCOURAGED: I'm pleased to pass along your important message. If living arrangements change, your family pet should not be abandoned or dumped to fend for itself. Contact a rescue group so the animal can be placed for adoption with another pet lover or a shelter.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have often read complaints about people who are chronically late, but I have the opposite problem with my friend, "Adele," who is annoyingly early.

If I am hosting a get-together, Adele invariably arrives 45 to 60 minutes before the start time. I am usually making last-minute preparations then and have sometimes not even gotten into the shower yet. If we are going to an event together, Adele will also arrive long before the appointed time, and I feel rushed and rude for ignoring her while I get ready. If I am driving, when I pick her up she's always waiting on her front step as though I am late.

Abby, I am a prompt person. I always try to get to an appointment five to 10 minutes early, or arrive at a party 10 to 15 minutes after the appointed time, which I have been told is good manners. Other than this one issue, Adele and I are close, and I enjoy her companionship very much. I don't want to jeopardize our friendship. Am I rude for making her wait, or is she rude for imposing herself on me?

ON TIME IN GERMANTOWN, WIS.

DEAR ON TIME: It is as rude to arrive very early as it is to show up very late. According to Emily Post's "Etiquette," a person should show up for an appointment (or social engagement) on time or shortly after the time it is scheduled.

Adele may be lonely and hungry for company or have a lot of time on her hands, but you should be good enough friends that you can explain that when she shows up as early as she does, it puts undue pressure on you. And the fact she chooses to wait on her front step to be picked up should not make you feel guilty. It is her preference, and not a reflection on you.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: After I ordered at a fast-food establishment, the cashier informed me of the amount of the bill. I had the correct change and placed the money on the counter. She looked at me and told me it was rude to place the money on the counter instead of into her hands. She asked me if I had a problem with handing her the money.

I was offended. Since I have never worked in the fast-food industry, does placing payment on the counter send a negative message? What are your thoughts, Abby?

BURGER BOY IN MISSISSIPPI

DEAR BURGER BOY: I think the cashier may have been having a bad day and was looking for a reason to dump on someone. Whether you placed the cash on the counter or into her hands, your bill was paid, and this is all that matters as long as you were polite to her.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

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Favre touches down in New York

NEW YORK (AP)—Cameras flashing by the dozens, a wide-eyed Brett Favre took his first steps into the New York spotlight.

"Just like home," the Jets' newest quarterback said Friday with a deep breath and a sheepish grin.

Get used to it, Brett. This is only the beginning.

"Time will tell, but I don't want to say, 'Be patient,'" Favre said Friday at a City Hall news conference. "I have to get a lot done in a short amount of time. They wouldn't have signed me if they didn't think I could do that."

A three-time MVP who led two Green Bay teams to the Super Bowl, Favre is more than just a country boy from Mississippi. But even he seemed a little awed by his welcome to jaded New York. Mayor Michael Bloomberg greeted him, showering the star quarterback with a number of gifts - including some cheesecakes—designed to help with his transition.

"The legendary No. 4 has now become Jet Favre," Bloomberg said, "and we're delighted to welcome him to City Hall."

The Jets acquired the recently unretired Favre from the Packers for a conditional draft pick late Wednesday night. He was with the team for its preseason-opening victory at Cleveland, flew into town early Friday morning and quickly popped in for his City Hall visit.

The Hall of Famer in waiting will practice with his new teammates for the first time Saturday after passing his physical. After his meeting with the mayor, Favre headed to the team's facility and took his conditioning test, joined in team meetings and got better acquainted with his teammates.

"I know I still can play," said Favre, wearing a blue and white polo shirt and khaki slacks and sporting his familiar 5 o'clock shadow. "I don't think too many people question that. I think a lot of people question what happened this offseason."

Favre closed a summer of discontent and opened a new chapter in his career by joining the Jets, who stunned the NFL by outbidding the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for the iconic QB.

AP

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, left, presents new New York Jets quarterback Brett Favre with a bag of Junior's cheesecakes at a City Hall news conference, Friday Aug. 8, 2008.

He brings instant relevance to a team that went 4-12 last season and hasn't had a quarterback of his stature since Joe Namath ruled Manhattan more than 30 years ago.

"There's no guarantees," Favre said. "You see teams go out in free agency and spend on a lot of guys and everyone says, 'Oh, they're going to be great and go to the Super Bowl.' It takes chemistry, and to me, that's the most important thing. You can have all the talent in the world, but if the chemistry is not there, it won't matter.

"I think we can achieve that."

After a huddle with staff members, Bloomberg picked out a few things to help Favre "make a quick adjustment" to the Big Apple. As part of the city's initiative to plant a million trees by 2017, Bloomberg announced one would be planted in Favre's name.

"I cannot tell you where the tree is going to be, for obvious reasons, because it'll be stripped bare in about 30 seconds," said Bloomberg, wearing a green tie in honor of the Jets.

Bloomberg then presented Favre with a MetroCard—with $4 fare on it, of course.

"If you had picked a number higher, you would've gotten more money on your MetroCard," Bloomberg said, drawing laughs.

He also gave Favre a huge "Broadway" street sign, a copy of his book, "Bloomberg by Bloomberg," an empty key ring—"You win the Super Bowl and I promise you will get a key"—and a few cheesecakes from Junior's Cheesecakes.

Favre, joined by Jets owner Woody Johnson and general manager Mike Tannenbaum, presented Bloomberg with a green and white Favre jersey, already a hit with fans who have snatched up over 6,500 of them since the trade. The 38-year-old Favre, who joked that his daughter asked if he was joining a college team because all the other players look much younger, won't commit to playing for the Jets beyond this season.

"Let's enjoy this year," he said. "The future is now. I don't have 17 more years to play, I don't think. I want to give the New York Jets and the people of this city the best year possible. Believe me."

Favre is coming off one of his most productive seasons, passing for 4,155 yards, his most since 1998, and had 28 TDs with 15 interceptions.

"We wish Brett nothing but the best," said Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers, Favre's replacement. "He still has the utmost amount of respect from the guys in this locker room here and we wish him well, wish him a good season and hope to see him in Tampa."

That, of course, is the site of the next Super Bowl.

"The pressure is just building," Favre said. "The attention I've gotten since I've been here has been overwhelming. The bottom line, as we all know, is to win games. That's what I'm here to do."

Five months after a tearfully retiring, and a month after changing his mind, Favre is starting over. His new teammates are glad he is.

"There have been smiling faces around here all day," said Jets tight end Bubba Franks, who played eight seasons with Favre in Green Bay. "It is good to have him here. When you play with a legend, you can't help but feed off of it. I think he'll fit right in with both the team and the city."

Favre is now part of a rebuilding Jets team which has been reduced to second-stringer status in New York behind the Super Bowl champion Giants.

"Hopefully I can bring as much excitement throughout the year," Favre said, "as we've had the last two or three days."

Dolphins sign ex-Jet Chad Pennington

By DAVE GOLDBERG
AP FOOTBALL WRITER

Chad Pennington, cut by the New York Jets after they signed Brett Favre, signed with the Miami Dolphins on Friday.

The 32-year-old Pennington, expected to be the starting quarterback for Miami, agreed to the deal Friday worth $11.5 million over two years, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press. The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the move hasn't been officially announced.

"We are neither confirming nor denying the report," Dolphins spokesman Harvey Greene said Friday night.

Bill Parcells, now the Dolphins' vice president of football operations, drafted Pennington with the 18th overall pick in 2000 when he was the Jets' general manager.

The Dolphins, coming off a 1-15 season, will open the season against the Jets in Miami, giving Pennington an immediate chance to face his former team.

Before the signing, Pennington said he was disappointed but had no hard feelings after being released by the Jets.

"I have enjoyed it," Pennington said Friday in his first public comments since his release. "I've learned a lot, become a better professional and a better man because of my experience and my time in New York. I don't regret or feel ashamed about anything that happened to me in my time in New York."

Pennington became the popular face of the Jets for several seasons and arrived in camp competing with Kellen Clemens for the starting job. The Jets jettisoned Pennington to clear salary cap space once they got Favre from Green Bay.

"The most difficult part is just the realization that the organization no longer wants you," Pennington said. "You spend eight years there and, in the blink of an eye, you're no longer wanted there."

The 32-year-old Pennington ranks first in NFL history among quarterbacks with at least 1,500 attempts with a 65.6 completion percentage. He was often recognized as being a leader in the huddle and an intelligent field general, but was dogged throughout his time in New York for his lack of arm strength.

Injuries were also a problem for Pennington, who broke his wrist in 2003 and had two rotator cuff operations in eight months in 2005. His career was in doubt, but he bounced back and was the NFL Comeback Player of the Year after beating out Clemens, Brooks Bollinger and Patrick Ramsey for the starting job in 2006. He had his best all-around season, throwing for a career-high 3,352 yards while again leading the Jets to the playoffs and starting every game for the first time.

He struggled last season, going 1-7 as the starter and was benched after Week 8 in favor of Clemens. Pennington had done a bit better than Clemens early in training camp, and was considered the favorite to open the season as the starter at Miami.

Then, came the news that Favre was coming to town. Pennington found out from coach Eric Mangini around 11:30 p.m. Wednesday, shortly before the team announced the deal.

Clippers sign point guard Williams

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Los Angeles Clippers acquired still another player during their busy offseason, signing free-agent point guard Jason Williams on Thursday.

The 32-year-old Williams averaged 8.8 points, 4.6 assists, 1.9 rebounds and 28 minutes in 67 appearances last season with the Miami Heat. His backcourt mate there was Ricky Davis, another free agent signed by the Clippers on July 28.

"We are excited to add Jason to our squad," Clippers coach Mike Dunleavy said in a statement. "He brings added veteran leadership and playoff experience to our backcourt."

Williams is a veteran of 10 NBA seasons, the last three with the Heat. He was a member of their 2006 league championship team.

In 679 regular-season games, he has averaged 11.4 points, 6.3 assists and 2.4 rebounds while playing for three different teams. He has appeared in 53 playoff games, averaging 9.8 points, 3.7 assists and 2.2 rebounds.

Clippers general manager Elgin Baylor called Williams "a terrific ball handler with great passing ability and court vision."

Williams' ranked eighth in the league last season with a 3.37 assists per turnover ratio, and 12th with a 0.91 steals per turnover ratio.

He was drafted by Sacramento in 1998 following his junior year at the University of Florida and was named to the 1999 NBA All-Rookie Team after he averaged 12.8 points and 6.0 assists. He has averaged scoring in double figures and at least five assists a game in eight of his 10 years in the league.

Williams moved to Memphis before the 2001-02 season and over the following four years became the Grizzlies' career leader in assists and 3-point attempts. He joined the Heat before the 2005-06 season.

Terms of his contract with Los Angeles were not announced.

The Clippers have added 10 new players, including Baron Davis and Marcus Camby. There are 14 players on their roster.

Unrestricted free agents Elton Brand and Corey Maggette left the Clippers. Brand signed with Philadelphia, and Maggette went to Golden State.

White Sox down Red Sox to keep AL Central lead

CHICAGO (AP)—The Chicago White Sox maintained their narrow lead atop the American League's Central Division with a 5-3 win over Boston on Friday that dropped the Red Sox further off the pace in the East Division.

Chicago pitcher Mark Buehrle took a shutout into the eighth inning, tying his season high of eight strikeouts to rebound from successive losses in his previous two starts.

Angels 10, Yankees 5

In Anaheim, California, Los Angeles beat New York to stretch the Angels' lead in the West Division to a season-high 13 games.

Torii Hunter had four hits with a home run and four RBIs, and Howie Kendrick tied a career high with four hits for Los Angeles.

Twins 4, Royals 1

In Kansas City, Missouri, starter Kevin Slowey limited Kansas City to one run in six innings, steering Minnesota to victory.

The Twins took advantage of eight walks, while Slowey did not walk a batter. It was the 16th time in 29 career starts that he has not allowed a walk.

Indians 5, Blue Jays 2

In Toronto, Cleveland rebounded from an extraordinary defeat to beat Toronto.

The Indians gave up six runs in the ninth inning to lose to Tampa Bay on Wednesday, but had no such threat Friday thanks to a strong pitching effort led by newly acquired Anthony Reyes.

Athletics 4, Tigers 2

In Detroit, Oakland snapped a 10-game losing streak by downing Detroit.

Rookie reliever Brad Ziegler tied the Athletics' record for consecutive scoreless innings. He pitched the eighth and ninth innings for his first save. He extended his scoreless streak to 37 consecutive innings to tie the record set in 1976.

Orioles 9, Rangers 1

In Baltimore, the home side cruised to a victory that inflicted a third straight loss on Texas.

Orioles starting pitcher Jeremy Guthrie allowed only one run in seven innings to win his third straight start. Guthrie walked just one and had four strikeouts. The right-hander is 3-0 with a 1.21 ERA in his past three starts.

Rays 5, Mariners 3

In Seattle, Tampa Bay stretched its lead atop the East to its biggest in over a month by downing Seattle.

Carlos Pena hit his 21st home run and drove in another run, compensating for the absence of injured Evan Longoria, the team's leader in home runs and RBIs.

Mets 3, Phillies 0

In New York, the New York Mets beat the Florida Marlins to take the first game of a vital series between the two rivals in the tight National League East division.

The result lifted New York half a game ahead of Florida and within one game of East leader Philadelphia.

Cubs 3, Cardinals 2, 11 innings

In Chicago, slugger Jim Edmonds returned to haunt his old team, hitting two homers to power Chicago narrowly past St. Louis.

Henry Blanco singled home the Cubs' winning run with the bases loaded in the 11th inning, keeping Chicago five games clear atop the Central division and now seven games in front of the Cardinals.

Braves 11, Diamondbacks 6

In Phoenix, Chipper Jones returned from the disabled list to spur Atlanta to victory, inflicting a third straight defeat on Arizona.

The run of defeats had slashed the Diamondbacks lead in the West division to just half a game.

Dodgers 6, Giants 2

In San Francisco, Los Angeles beat San Francisco to move within half a game of leadership of the West division.

Dodgers starter Brad Penny looked like an ace in his return from a shoulder injury, giving up only one hit in five innings to win for the first time since May.

Pirates 2, Phillies 0, 12 innings

In Philadelphia, the home team's scoreless streak extended to 23 innings, losing in extra innings to Pittsburgh.

Defeat sliced the Phillies' lead in the East to just one game.

Rockies 6, Padres 3

In Denver, Glendon Rusch pitched six solid innings against his former team to steer Colorado past San Diego.

Rusch, who started the year in the Padres' bullpen before being released and signing with the Rockies in May, gave up only two runs to earn his fourth straight win.

Brewers 5, Nationals 0

In Milwaukee, pitcher C.C. Sabathia extended his impressive winning streak with Milwaukee, shutting out Washington.

Sabathia recorded his ninth straight win. He has not lost in 12 starts, seven of them since being traded to Milwaukee from Cleveland. He is 6-0 with a 1.57 ERA for the Brewers.

Astros 9, Reds 5, 10 innings

In Cincinnati, Houston got four runs with two outs in the 10th inning to beat Cincinnati.

With two outs, the Astros got a double and a walk before Carlos Lee drove the ball to right-center. It was almost caught to end the inning, but dribbled from Corey Patterson's glove, bringing home two runs.

Holmes leads the PGA as the only player under par

BLOOMFIELDTOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)—J.B. Holmes and his monster length turned out to be a good fit for Oakland Hills. With a black glove on his hand and a scowl on his face, Holmes hammered one tee shot after another Friday and kept most of them in the short grass, leading to a 2-under 68 for a one-shot lead going into the weekend at the PGA Championship.

Holmes was at 1-under 139, the only player to break par over two rounds on a course known as "The Monster." It was the first time since 1972—at Oakland Hills, not so coincidentally—that only one player was under par through 36 holes of the PGA Championship.

"When I hit my driver like I did today, this is an easy sport," Holmes said.

It sure didn't feel easy to anyone else.

Sergio Garcia four-putted the 17th green late in the second round just as he was trying to catch Holmes, and instead dropped to a 73 and was three shots behind. Phil Mickelson struggled with a few bad drives, a few poor chips and not many putts, making three bogeys over the final five holes for a 73 that left him four shots behind.

Colin Montgomerie found nothing easy about Oakland Hills. He had to play his best golf over the closing holes to avoid his worst score as a professional, salvaging an 84 to match his worst score ever in a major.

Ben Curtis, who on Thursday said only one player would like Oakland Hills by the end of the week, got along just fine Friday with a 67, matching Justin Rose with the best score of the tournament and leaving both of them one shot behind at even-par 140.

"It's the kind of round I've been looking for to get myself back on the leaderboard and feeling the good vibes," Rose said.

They were joined by Charlie Wi, a 36-year-old who has played on just about every tour, but never in a major championship until this week. He made his debut with back-to-back 70s and will play in the final group Saturday with Holmes.

Former PGA champion David Toms (69) and Henrik Stenson of Sweden (70) were at 1-over 141. The group at 142 included Garcia, former U.S. Open champion Angel Cabrera (72) and Sean O'Hair, who steadied himself after a double bogey on his opening hole and shot 73.

For the second straight day, only six players broke par.

"When I got here on Tuesday, I called home and I said, 'This is the hardest golf course I've ever played,'" Wi said. "If I were to play here every day, I don't know if I would enjoy it. It's a very difficult golf course."

Wi might see a different course while playing with Holmes.

The 26-year-old from Kentucky put his Paul Bunyan length on display during a morning of blue skies. It's a wonder some of his tee shots didn't leave contrails.

He leads the field in driving distance at 338 yards, and that doesn't include a mammoth tee shot on the 501-yard 14th that left him only a wedge to the green, where he made a 25-foot putt for his third straight birdie.

Holmes reached the 529-yard second hole with a wedge for a two-putt birdie from 12 feet, and he got home in two on the 593-yard 12th with an 8-iron. A stiff breeze was at his back on that 217-yard shot.

He hit driver on all but four holes.

"I'm not that aggressive if I'm not hitting my driver good," Holmes said. "If I'm hitting bad shots with it, you don't hit it as much. You hit it right where you've looked? Whale away.

"If you're hitting where you're aiming it every time, you're hitting good."

There were some comparisons to another young player from the South who hit it a country mile and overwhelmed Crooked Stick in 1991 to win the PGA Championship. But that's about the only resemblance to John Daly.

Holmes is not the ninth alternate, rather a two-time winner on the PGA Tour who might have secured a spot on the Ryder Cup team to be held next month at Valhalla in Kentucky, a course he knows better than anyone on tour.

He lives clean and plays hard. His swing is compact, the power generated by his huge thighs. And the legend of Holmes is that he played on his high school golf team when he was in the third grade.

Yes, it was a small town. But even as a youngster, he was big off the tee.

"My senior year of high school, I went out and watched Tiger," Holmes said, referring to a trip to the 1998 Masters. "A lot of the players, they said hit the ball really long. And they did. I was like, 'That's not much farther than me, if at all.'"

But length isn't everything, especially on the wild greens of Oakland Hills. Holmes lost two shots off his lead on the closing holes, with a poor chip on the 15th and a three-putt from across the long green on the par-3 17th.

Curtis played his final 15 holes without a bogey and is the only major champion at par or better, even if some still think his victory at Royal St. George's in 2003 at the British Open was a fluke. He has won twice more on tour since then.

"I know I can win another one," he said. "It's just a matter of taking care of the opportunities that I'm given. There's weeks where you can play your best and not win, and there's weeks where you can kind of stumble your way in and win."

The stumbling belonged to Mickelson and Garcia, although the Spaniard chalked it up to one bad hole—or four bad putts—and bristled when it was suggested that the back nine was a struggle.

"No, it wasn't. It wasn't at all," said Garcia, considered the best player without a major. "Unfortunately, things didn't happen for me on the back nine. It's very difficult and this is a major."

Mickelson is perplexed by the raking of grass toward the tee, which makes it stand firm and led to some poor chips. But he remained optimistic, and should be. Twenty players were separated by four shots going into the weekend.

"There's a lot of golf left out here, and the golf course is very difficult," he said. "So I think that it won't be overly difficult if you play well to make up some ground."

The cut was at 148, the highest since the gnarly rough of Oak Hill in 2003. Among the victims were Vijay Singh, who was coming off his first World Golf Championship last week; and Woody Austin and Hunter Mahan, who were Nos. 9 and 10 in the Ryder Cup standings.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	69	46	.600	_
Boston	66	50	.569	3 1/2
New York	63	53	.543	6 1/2
Toronto	59	57	.509	10 1/2
Baltimore	55	59	.482	13 1/2

Central Division

Chicago	64	50	.561	_
Minnesota	64	51	.557	1/2
Detroit	56	59	.487	8 1/2
Kansas City	53	63	.457	12
Cleveland	50	64	.439	14

West Division

Los Angeles	72	43	.626	_
Texas	60	57	.513	13
Oakland	54	61	.470	18
Seattle	45	71	.388	27 1/2

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Philadelphia	62	53	.539	_
New York	61	54	.530	1
Florida	61	55	.526	1 1/2
Atlanta	54	62	.466	8 1/2
Washington	44	72	.379	18 1/2

Central Division

Chicago	70	46	.603	_
Milwaukee	65	51	.560	5
St. Louis	64	54	.542	7
Houston	56	59	.487	13 1/2
Pittsburgh	53	62	.461	16 1/2
Cincinnati	52	65	.444	18 1/2

West Division

Arizona	59	57	.509	_
Los Angeles	58	57	.504	1/2
Colorado	53	65	.449	7
San Francisco	48	66	.421	10
San Diego	44	72	.379	15

Yesterday's Games

Oakland 4, Detroit 2
Baltimore 9, Texas 1
Cleveland 5, Toronto 2
Minnesota 4, Kansas City 1
Chicago White Sox 5, Boston 3
L.A. Angels 10, N.Y. Yankees 5
Tampa Bay 5, Seattle 3
Chicago Cubs 3, St. Louis 2, 11 innings
Pittsburgh 2, Philadelphia 0, 12 innings
N.Y. Mets 3, Florida 0
Houston 9, Cincinnati 5, 10 innings
Milwaukee 5, Washington 0
Colorado 6, San Diego 3
Atlanta 11, Arizona 6
L.A. Dodgers 6, San Francisco 2

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP SCORES

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, Michigan (AP)—Scores Friday from the second round of the PGA of America-PGA Championship played at the par-70 (35-35), 7,395-yard Oakland Hills Golf Club course:

SECOND ROUND

J.B. Holmes	71-68	139
Charlie Wi	70-70	140
Ben Curtis	73-67	140
Justin Rose	73-67	140
David Toms	72-69	141
Henrik Stenson	71-70	141
Angel Cabrera	70-72	142
Brandt Snedeker	71-71	142
Jeev Milkha Singh	68-74	142
Aaron Baddeley	71-71	142
Sergio Garcia	69-73	142
Ken Duke	69-73	142
Sean O'Hair	69-73	142
Nicholas Thompson	71-72	143
Briny Baird	71-72	143
Paul Goydos	74-69	143
D.J. Trahan	72-71	143
Boo Weekley	72-71	143
Phil Mickelson	70-73	143
Steve Flesch	73-70	143
Brian Gay	70-74	144
Tom Lehman	74-70	144
Michael Campbell	73-71	144
Steve Elkington	71-73	144
Peter Hanson	71-73	144
Michael Allen	70-75	145
Padraig Harrington	71-74	145
Rory Sabbatini	72-73	145
Ian Poulter	74-71	145
Alastair Forsyth	73-72	145
Robert Karlsson	68-77	145
Carl Pettersson	71-74	145
Anthony Kim	70-75	145
Justin Leonard	74-71	145
Fredrik Jacobson	75-71	146
Stuart Appleby	76-70	146
Ernie Els	71-75	146
Retief Goosen	72-74	146
Dean Wilson	73-73	146
Mark Brown	77-69	146
Paul Casey	72-74	146
Pat Perez	73-73	146
Camilo Villegas	74-72	146
Steve Stricker	71-75	146
Graeme McDowell	74-72	146
Niclas Fasth	73-73	146
Prayad Marksaeng	76-70	146
Kevin Sutherland	76-71	147
Rocco Mediate	73-74	147
Mark Calcavecchia	71-76	147
Chris DiMarco	75-72	147
Andres Romero	69-78	147
John Mallinger	72-75	147
Hiroyuki Fujita	77-70	147
Steve Marino	73-74	147
Charl Schwartzel	77-70	147
Geoff Ogilvy	73-74	147
Billy Mayfair	69-78	147
Louis Oosthuizen	76-72	148
Bubba Watson	75-73	148
Paul Azinger	72-76	148
Charles Howell III	72-76	148
John Merrick	73-75	148
John Senden	76-72	148
Mike Weir	73-75	148
James Kingston	72-76	148
Tim Clark	76-72	148
Jim Furyk	71-77	148
Corey Pavin	75-73	148
Robert Allenby	76-72	148
Peter Lonard	74-74	148
Chez Reavie	78-70	148
Richard Green	71-77	148

By The Associated Press

NMIFA 3-on-3 soccer a go today

With six full teams running up and down the CPA Airport Field three days out of the week and scores of unsigned players waiting in the wings, the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association is in the midst of its most successful coed soccer league in its three year history.

The most popular sport on the planet has finally gained more than a foothold in the CNMI, and the NMIFA Women's Committee is capitalizing on the excitement by hosting its first 3-on-3 Coed Football Tournament today, Aug. 10, at Navy Hill field

The Women's Committee has already drummed up support from the local community as PTI, Pacific Islands Club, Tan Holdings Corp., Whispering Palms School, and CNMI Parks and Recreation have teamed up to host the event.

Registration is $10 and will begin at 8am at Navy Hill field, adjacent to Whispering Palms School. In order to maximize the action during the tournament, organizers are limiting the tournament to a total of 60 players.

"There is limited space so arrive early! Once registration has closed teams will be chosen at random," said NMIFA Women's Committee spokesperson, Laura Williams.

Williams added that the proceeds from the tournament will be used to fund equipment for the upcoming Woman's Futsal season, which is set to begin Oct. 1, at the Northern Marianas College gymnasium. ***(NMIFA)***

NMIFA Women's Committee is hosting its first 3-on-3 Coed Football Tournament today, Aug. 10, at the Navy Hill field.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

POWER

From Page 28

At least the Fishing Derby is on for this weekend. That's only because it's during the daytime and out on the water. Oh no, the banquet! Puh-leeze, let there be light!

Having spent most of my life in the islands (do the math), I consider myself to be fairly laid back and pretty much a non-complainer used to insular hardships. When the power goes out at our house, my wife curses while I do yoga and meditate. Doesn't bother me a whole lot. Even MCV not getting the Olympics live doesn't ruffle me much as I am only mildly interested in them. I would like to see men's basketball but wouldn't get frazzled when women's gymnastics suddenly unexpectedly goes off the air.

Sports on television during the summer is like our current weather, the doldrums. Nothing to get excited about.

But then Monday night I had a revelation.

The NFL Hall of Fame game was on Channel 42. Coincidently, call it a miracle, the power was on and I saw rookie quarterback Colt Brennan out of Hawaii have a tremendous game. That's when I realized that I would go ballistic if I was watching the Gators or Brett Favre or any good football game when the power went out.

Now it just so happens that CUC is supposed to have additional generators and eliminate regular outages around the first week of September, which happens to be the start of football season.

I sure hope so.

However, just in case, I have instructed my wife to remove anything breakable from our living room.

CHINA

From Page 28

upward to light the Olympic flame.

Scores of world leaders were on hand, and the potential TV audience was 4 billion worldwide for what was certainly the costliest and probably the largest opening ceremony in Olympic history.

The centerpiece was the parade of athletes, climaxing with the entry of the 639-strong Chinese team. Its flagbearer was basketball idol Yao Ming, accompanied by 9-year-old schoolboy Lin Hao, a survivor of May's devastating earthquake in Sichuan province.

A chanting, flag-waving crowd gave a thunderous welcome, and erupted again a few moments later when President Hu Jintao declared the games open.

President Bush and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin were among the glittering roster of notables who endured heat and humidity to watch China make this bold declaration that it had arrived. Bush, rebuked by China after he raised human-rights concerns this week, is the first U.S. president to attend an Olympics on foreign soil.

Already an economic powerhouse, China is given a good chance of overtaking the U.S. atop the gold-medal standings with its legions of athletes trained intensely since childhood. One dramatic showdown will be in women's gymnastics, where the U.S. and Chinese teams are co-favorites; in the pool, Chinese divers and U.S. swimmers are expected to dominate.

The run-up to the games had powerful story lines—China investing $40 billion to build Olympic infrastructure, reeling from the Sichuan earthquake, struggling right through Friday to diminish the stubborn smog that enveloped the stadium, known as the Bird's Nest. China's detentions of political activists, its crackdown on uprisings in Tibet and its economic ties to Sudan—home of the war-torn Darfur region—fueled persistent criticisms from human rights groups and calls for an Olympic boycott.

Second-guessed for awarding the games to Beijing seven years ago, the International Olympic Committee stood firmly by its decision. It was time, the committee said, to bring the games to the homeland of 1.3 billion people, a fifth of humanity.

"For a long time, China has dreamed of opening its doors and inviting the world's athletes to Beijing for the Olympic Games," IOC president Jacques Rogge said in his speech. "Tonight, that dream comes true."

Rogge mentioned the earthquake, saying the world was moved "by the great courage and solidarity of the Chinese people." And he exhorted the assembled athletes, as role models for the world's youth, to "reject doping and cheating."

The story presented in Friday's pageantry sought to distill 5,000 years of Chinese history—featuring everything from the Great Wall to opera puppets to astronauts, and highlighting achievements in art, music and science. Roughly 15,000 people were in the cast and crew, all under the direction of Zhang Yimou, whose early films often ran afoul of government censors for their blunt portrayals of China's problems.

He produced some majestic and ethereal imagery. At the start, 2,008 drummers beat out a pulsating rhythm with their hands. Later, a huge, translucent globe emerged from the stadium floor, and acrobats floated magically around it to the accompaniment of the games' theme song, "One World, One Dream."

It ended sensationally, when China's first Olympic superstar, former triple gymnastics gold medalist Li Ning, was hoisted by wires to the top of the stadium, circled the circumference as though he were spacewalking and then touched the torch to a thin pipe, setting off a spiral of flame to ignite the mammoth, scroll-shaped cauldron overlooking Beijing.

Li, now 44, whose six medals total at Los Angeles in 1984 signaled China's intention to be a sports powerhouse, admitted to being nervous about "the best memory of my life."

"This is a glorious but also huge task for anyone," he said. "I should never let the dream of all the Chinese people down. That was why I was nervous."

Li had trained for his part for a month. "The biggest problem is the wind," he said. "Every time I must balance myself in the air and hold the torch as close to the cauldron gas outlet. But every time the wind blew in different directions."

There were no such problems Friday, and when it was over, Li basked in his success. "That moment," he proclaimed, "means China is standing side by side with the rest of the world."

The show's script steered clear of modern politics—there were no references to Chairman Mao and the class struggle, nor to the more recent conflicts and controversies.

A record 204 delegations paraded their athletes through the stadium—superstars such as tennis great Roger Federer and basketball's Kobe Bryant, as well as plucky underdogs from Iraq, Afghanistan and other embattled lands. The nations marched not in the traditional alphabetical order but in a sequence based on the number of strokes it takes to write their names in Chinese. The exceptions were Greece, birthplace of the Olympics, which was given its traditional place at the start, and the Chinese team, which lined up last.

The U.S. team—second-largest after China's with nearly 600 members—was welcomed loudly, with many in the crowd recognizing Bryant and other basketball stars who brought up the rear. Bush rose from his VIP seat to wave at the athletes, nattily dressed in white trousers, blue blazers, red-white-and-blue-striped ties and white caps.

"It was a breathtaking experience walking into the stadium," said Oganna Nnamani, a volleyball player from Bloomington, Ill. "I am thankful to be part of this moment."

"This is the biggest stage," said LeBron James, who hopes to lead the U.S. basketball team to a gold medal.

Among the flag-bearers were basketball stars Dirk Nowitzki of Germany and Manu Ginobili of Argentina, and South African swimmer Nathalie Du Toit, who lost her lower left leg in an accident and made history by qualifying for both the able-bodied games and the Paralympics.

The American flag-bearer was 1,500-meter runner Lopez Lomong, one of the Lost Boys of Sudan, who spent a decade of his youth in a refugee camp in Kenya. He's a member of the Team Darfur coalition, representing athletes opposed to China's support for Sudan. On Friday he avoided any criticism and said the Chinese "have been great putting all these things together."

Abroad, human rights activists were less generous.

"The Chinese government and the International Olympic Committee have wasted a historic opportunity to use the Beijing Games to make real progress on human rights in China," said Sophie Richardson of Human Rights Watch.

Few Olympics-related disturbances were reported in China. But in Katmandu, Nepal, hundreds of Tibetan exiles demonstrated outside the Chinese embassy, demanding an end to what they say is Beijing's brutal rule. In Turkey, an anti-China protester set himself on fire.

By all indications, the Chinese have overwhelmingly embraced the games, buying up tickets at a record pace, volunteering by the thousands for Olympic duties, nursing expectations of triumphs by their home team.

To their eyes, the omens were good. The ceremony began at 8 p.m. on the eighth day of the eighth month of 2008—auspicious in a country where eight is the luckiest number.

TWO

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pic committee said 29-year-old Tassos Gousis, who competes in the 200 meters, tested positive for the steroid methyltrienolone on Monday. He has been sent home from a pre-games training camp in Japan after being informed of the result.

"The first test returned positive," Greek press officer Tasos Papachristou told The Associated Press. "He's not in the team. Now he's traveling to Greece where I imagine he will ask for the 'B' sample (to be tested)."

Gousis finished eighth in the 200 at last year's world championships in Osaka, Japan. He competed in the 2004 Athens Olympics but failed to qualify for the 200 final.

More than 140 competitors from 54 countries left the start line in central Beijing for a 245.4-kilometer (152.5-mile) road cycling race that will take them past Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City and other landmarks before they ride out of the city for seven punishing laps of a hilly loop course between two points on the Great Wall.

The finish is at Juyongguan, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) outside Beijing.

Later, golds were to be awarded in men's 10-meter air pistol and the women's individual saber in fencing, where Americans were favored to sweep the medals.

In women's basketball, Lauren Jackson, the WNBA's most valuable player last year with the Seattle Storm, scored 18 points to lead Australia to an 83-64 win over Belarus.

There are later qualifying heats in swimming, where Michael Phelps will begin his quest for a record eight Olympic gold medals in the 400-meter individual medley. The final is Sunday morning.

Phelps is expected to be pushed by American teammate Ryan Lochte. The pair swam a memorable 400 IM final at the U.S. trials in June, when Phelps won in 4 minutes, 5.25 seconds, Lochte finished second and both went under world-record time.

"I'm just ready for it to be here," Phelps said.

Other preliminary competition began Saturday in archery, badminton, beach volleyball, boxing, men's artistic gymnastics, rowing and sailing.

White Sox down Red Sox to keep AL Central lead

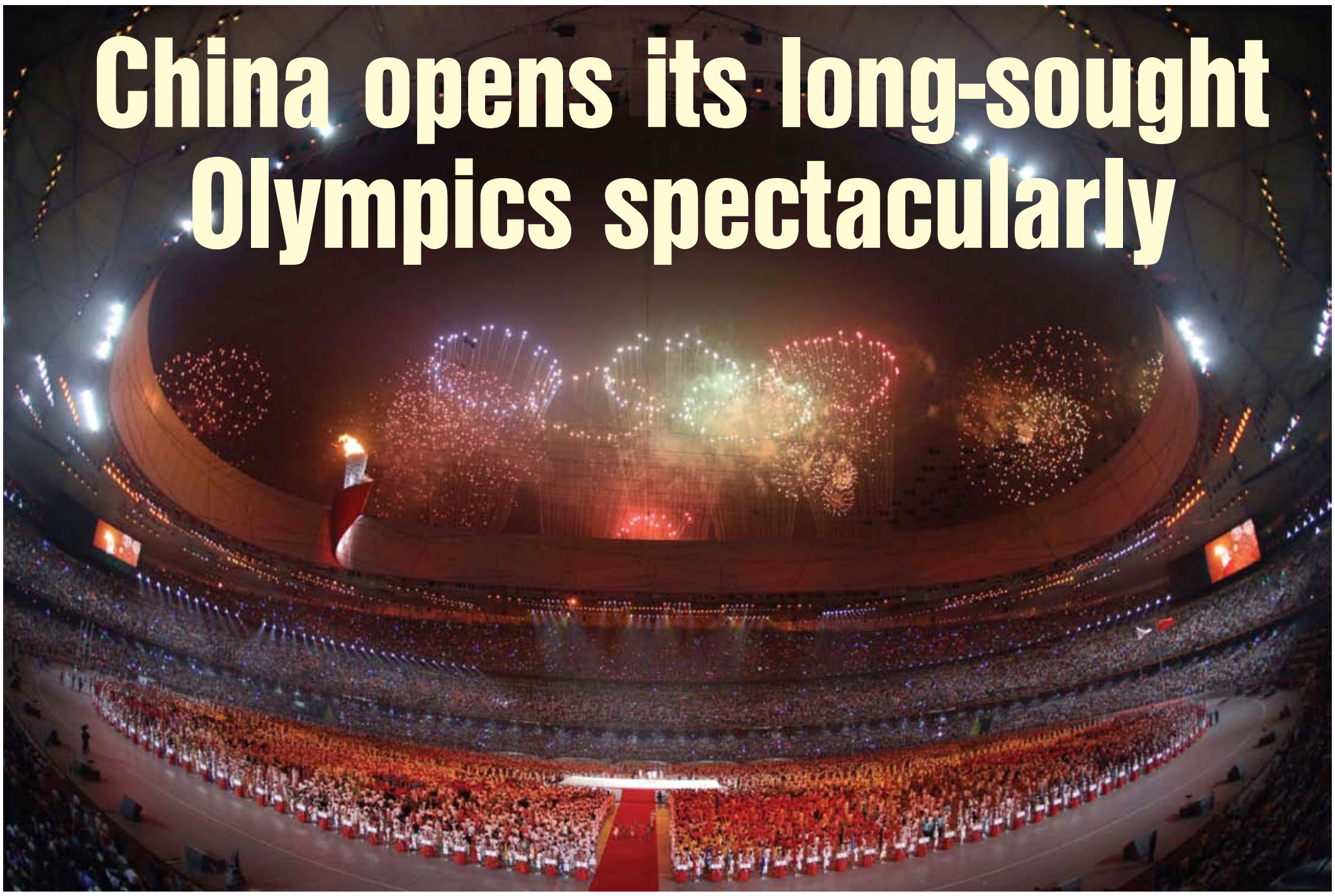
The Chicago White Sox maintained their narrow lead atop the American League's Central Division with a 5-3 win over Boston on Friday that dropped the Red Sox further off the pace in the East Division. **26**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Favre touches down in New York

Cameras flashing by the dozens, a wide-eyed Brett Favre took his first steps into the New York spotlight. **25**

China opens its long-sought Olympics spectacularly



AP

Fireworks are set off over the National Stadium during the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games, Friday Aug. 8, 2008, in Beijing.

By DAVID CRARY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—China didn't just walk onto the world stage. It soared over it. At last playing its long-sought role as Olympic host, China opened the Summer Games in spectacular fashion Friday with an extravaganza of fireworks and pageantry dramatizing its ascendance as a global power.

Disasters, environmental problems and human-rights disputes preceded the games, and questions abound about how they will unfold. But for an evening, at least for the 91,000 people packed into the new National Stadium, it was an interlude of fervor and magic—capped by the spellbinding sight of a skywalking, torchbearing gymnast floating around the stadium's top rim before sending a torrent of fire

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Two golds awarded, one doping positive as Olympics start

Katerina Emmons, of the Czech Republic, celebrates after winning the gold medal in the women's 10M air rifle at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing Saturday, Aug. 9 2008.

AP

By DENNIS PASSA
AP SPORTS WRITER

BEIJING (AP)—The Olympics got under way Saturday with a gold medal for the host country and news that a Beijing-bound sprinter tested positive for doping.

Chen Xiexia of China won gold in the women's 48-kilogram weightlifting. Katerina Emmons of the Czech Republic had the distinction of winning the first of 302 golds to be awarded before the games end Aug. 24 when she took the 10-meter air rifle.

The Greek national Olym-

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Power football

OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Coldeen is a longtime journalist in the CNMI and is currently the news director of KSPN2.

What did Chamorros and Carolinians on Saipan use for lights before lanterns and candles?

Give up? Jim Valvano would be ashamed of you.

The answer: electricity.

Yes, that is a joke. An unfunny joke because it is on us.

But is there light at the end of the tunnel?

Oh, puh-leeze. Puns are no fun, especially when you have greater concerns such as your refrigerator or new television or old computer burning out due to voltage problems.

Local sports have ground to a halt. Since returning from vacation on Monday, I have struggled to put together my show for KSPN2, like trying to cook dinner without food. The only story I did was on the junior tennis team. That's because they are going off-island to play.

For my top plays of the week, I was thinking about showing a fuse blowing out.

The 2008 Saipan Major League season is in danger of becoming the 2008-2009 season. When I left more than two weeks ago, they were in the first round of the playoffs. I saw Rangers manager Craig Tenorio at the Guam airport Monday. I asked him who had won the championship. He laughed. They are still in the first round of the playoffs!

All basketball games at the Ada Gym last week were cancelled due to power outages, both scheduled and unscheduled. Officials became so frustrated they called off the games rather than give Mobil and Shell shareholders even greater profits from players driving back and forth to the gym only to find out they can't shoot baskets in the dark.

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